

Hafa Adai!

Conviction of 'Grandpa Ping'
is reversed.

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CHCC officials trade
accusations.

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Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

Volume XXV, Issue No. 1

FRIDAY JANUARY 2, 2015

www.saipantribune.com

75¢

Justices: CUC can sue govt

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The CNMI Supreme Court has affirmed Superior Court Associate Judge Joseph N. Camacho's ruling that the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. can sue the CNMI government for unpaid utility bills.

The high court basically disagreed with the government's argument that a writ of mandamus is proper because Camacho erred by concluding that CUC has the capacity to sue the Commonwealth.

According to the Supreme Court's opin-

See JUSTICES on Page 4

Star Marianas' access to Guam appears indefinite

By **DENNIS B. CHAN**
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REPORTER

Both Star Marianas Air and Rota Municipal Council treasurer Frank Atalig dispute the "safety reasons" being cited by Guam International Airport Authority for closing its commuter terminal. SMA believes they have documented evidence suggesting otherwise, and Atalig called GIAA's alleged security precautions "a total lie."

Right now, the commuter terminal is the center of a complaint SMA filed with the Federal Aviation Administration. SMA asserts that the terminal is being used by GIAA for "non-aeronautical purposes." The terminal is leased to United Airlines as a human resource department.

According to GIAA spokeswoman Ro-

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JAYSON CAMACHO

Tian You Xu, carried by his mother Ying Wu, 40, is joined by Commonwealth Health Center nurses after becoming the first baby born in the Commonwealth in 2015. From left to right: CHC Nursery nurse Sheila Barbo, nursing supervisor Joy Oblea, OB nurse Lalaine Divina, Xu and his mother, Wu, labor and delivery nurse Shirley Ann Weilbacher, NICU nurse Olive Gargallo, and labor and delivery nurse Marivic Tumulad.

Tian You is 2015 New Year baby

By **JAYSON CAMACHO**
jayson_camacho@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

An hour and two minutes after the clock struck 12 and fireworks lit up the island of Saipan, baby boy Tian You Xu was born at the Commonwealth Health Center, becoming the first baby born in the CNMI in 2015.

Weighing 8 lbs, Xu was born at 1:02am, becoming the third child in the family. His mother, Ying Wu, 40, was transferred to a room in the OB ward at 4am.

Although Wu could not speak English very well, she communicated that she is happy to have her baby, this time a son. Wu has two daughters, who are both in

China. The eldest daughter is 17 years old while the youngest is 5 years old.

CHC OB nurse Lalaine Divina became the caretaker for Wu and her baby once they got transferred to the OB ward.

According to Divina, OB physician Dr. Helen Taro and two other labor and delivery nurses, Anabel

Mocon and Jennifer Demapan, helped deliver the baby.

Since Wu couldn't speak English very well and there was no translator, she was accompanied to the hospital by her aunt since her husband is in China.

Divina said there was a second baby born on New Year's day but Wu's baby was the first to be born this year.

According to the nurses, the baby is healthy and lively.

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BUSINESS

The U.S. stock market climbs 11.4 percent and ends the year close to record levels.

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Thirty-five people die in a stampede during New Year's celebrations in Shanghai.

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Revelers converge everywhere to say good riddance to a turbulent 2014.

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'Grandpa Ping' conviction reversed

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The CNMI Supreme Court has reversed the convictions and ordered a new jury trial for Jose Ilo Santos, a 63-year-old man who was convicted of sexually abusing a then 7-year-old girl.

The high court ruled that the Superior Court abused its discretion by allowing the victim advocate to accompany the alleged victim to the witness stand.

The CNMI government is unable to meet its burden of proving beyond a reasonable doubt that the error was harmless, according to the high court's opinion on Tuesday penned by Associate Justice John A. Manglona and concurred by Chief Justice Alexandro C. Castro and Justice Pro Tem Herbert D. Soll.

The Office of the Attorney General charged Santos, also known as Grandpa Ping, with two counts of sexual abuse of a minor in the first degree for molesting the girl on April 23, 2011, and May 7, 2011, at his house in Tanapag.

In October 2012, the jury found Santos, also known as Grandpa Ping, guilty of all charges.

In March 2013, Superior Court Associate Judge Joseph N. Camacho sentenced Santos to the maximum of 60 years in prison, to be served without the possibility of parole.

Camacho noted that the violence done to the girl was so severe that nine days after the incident, doctors at the Commonwealth Health Center could still see the signs.

Santos, through assistant public defender Michael Sato, appealed his conviction to the Supreme Court.

Sato argued that the trial court erred by giving substantive jury instructions at the beginning of the trial, failing to give substantive jury instructions after the parties finished introducing evidence, and allowing a vic-

tim advocate to accompany the alleged victim during her testimony.

Santos focused his appeal on the court's decision to permit a victim advocate to stand by her during her testimony.

Before trial, the court held a hearing on the government's motion to allow a victim advocate to accompany the girl.

During the hearing, Santos' counsel contended that a victim advocate was improper without a showing of need.

In response, the government asserted that the victim advocate was appropriate under NMI Rules of Evidence 611 because the girl was young, and testifying about sexual abuse can be embarrassing.

After considering the parties' arguments, the court granted the government's request for a victim advocate to accompany the girl.

In reversing the convictions and remanding the case for new trial, the justices said shortly after the hearing on the victim advocate, the trial began with the court providing jury instructions before opening statements.

These instructions, the justices said, told the jury what they needed to find to convict Santos of sexual abuse of a minor in the first degree.

At the end of the trial, the justice said, the trial court provided two supplemental instructions and explained they should be read with the instructions given at the beginning of the trial.

The justices said, however, the judge did not repeat the instructions that were given before opening statements.

Sato asserted in his brief and at oral argument that the trial court violated Rule 30 by giving jury instructions before opening statements.

Sato argued that this rule requires instructions either immediately before or after closing arguments, and it would be absurd to construe "before argu-

See **GRANDPA** on Page 8

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From the Management and Staff of:

Girl Talk

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IN HUNTER'S OGA LAWSUIT OVER PASSAGE OF CASINO LAW**Judge refuses to reconsider non-dismissal of claims vs Inos, govt**

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Superior Court Associate Judge David A. Wiseman has denied Gov. Eloy S. Inos' and the CNMI government's request for him to reconsider his decision not to dismiss them as parties in Glen Hunter's Open Government Act lawsuit over the passage of the casino law.

Wiseman said that Inos and the CNMI government have not met their burden to prove that they are entitled to the extraordinary remedy of a motion for reconsideration under the Commonwealth Rules of Civil Procedure.

Wiseman said Inos' and the CNMI government's motion is problematic because it requires the court to take their word regarding the law.

He said Inos and the CNMI government do not define "controlling law" or cite any cases that are analogous to this matter.

"In essence, defendants ask that this court take a leap of faith on an untraditional and unproven approach to resolve what appears to be a factual dispute, one more appropriately resolved in a motion for summary judgment," the judge said.

Wiseman said he is not inclined to grant this motion, particularly not at this stage in the litigation where Hunter has the right to amend his complaint.

Wiseman ordered all parties in the case to attend a case management conference on Jan. 5, 2015, at 1:30pm.

Hunter is suing the government, Inos, the Lottery Commission, Senate President Ralph Torres, House Speaker Joseph Deleon Guerrero, and representatives Rafael Demapan and Felicidad Ogumoro.

Hunter, through counsel Jennifer Dockter, has asked the court to issue a declaratory judgment, explicitly stating that the OGA does, in fact, apply to the Legislature, and that the lawmakers named in the lawsuit are properly before the court for violating their public notice provisions.

The defendants had moved to dismiss the complaint against them, claiming, among other arguments, that the OGA is un-

constitutional as it applies to the Legislature, that the alleged violations are not justiciable, and that the legislator defendants are protected by legislative immunity.

Last October, Wiseman issued a decision that dismissed

the Lottery Commission as a party in the lawsuit. In the same ruling, Wiseman denied a motion to dismiss Inos and the CNMI government as improper parties in Hunter's lawsuit.

Wiseman ruled that retaining

the Lottery Commission as a party in the case would serve no purpose, as it has not itself violated the OGA provisions.

The judge said while he dismissed the Lottery Commission as an improper party due to its

lack of involvement or control over the Legislature, he cannot, in good conscience, dismiss Inos in these circumstances, as the governor became an indispensable party after involving himself in

See JUDGE on Next Page

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HAPPY NEW YEAR!



Tinian Dynasty execs sue Perez, other Labor officials

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
ferdie_deltorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The owner of Tinian Dynasty Hotel and Casino and its president have filed a lawsuit in federal court against U.S. Department of Labor Secretary Thomas E. Perez and other federal Labor officials for allegedly violating their due process right over their assessment of civil penalties of \$191,400 for violating the overtime provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act.

Hong Kong Entertainment (Overseas Investments Ltd.) and its president, treasurer, and chairman of the board, Kwan Man, are suing Perez, Labor Wage and Hour Division administrator David Weil, Labor Wage and Hour Division Western Region regional administrator Ruben Rosalez, and Labor Wage and Hour Division district

director Terrence Trotter.

HKE and Man, through counsel Bruce Berline, asked the U.S. District Court for the CNMI to declare that the compliance agreement that HKE signed with a Labor investigator precludes Perez and co-defendants from assessing a civil money penalty against HKE and/or Man.

HKE and Man asked the court to set aside the decision of Labor Administrative Review that affirmed Labor Administrative Law Judge's holding that HKE violated the overtime provisions of the FLSA and the Administrative Law Judge's imposition of civil penalties of \$191,400.

The plaintiffs asked the court to remand the matter back to a Labor Administrative Law Judge with instructions to hold a hearing on the merits regarding the propriety of the civil mon-

etary penalty amount assessed against HKE and Man.

HKE and Man sought court's order declaring that the portion of the law that allows the Labor Wage and Hour administrator to determine and assess a civil monetary penalty, in general and/or as applied in this case, violates due process.

They asked the court to enjoin defendants from assessing a civil monetary penalty against them. They demanded an award of court costs and attorney's fees.

According to Berline in the complaint, in May 2007, the Labor Wage and Hour Division administrator conducted an investigation of HKE which covered the period March 16, 2007 to May 26, 2007.

Berline said the investigator, based on his review of HKE's time and payroll records, con-

cluded that HKE had violated the FLSA due to delayed payrolls in the investigation period.

HKE did not and does not deny or dispute that it had delayed payrolls during that period.

Berline said at the time of the investigation, the federal minimum wage provisions had not been extended to the CNMI and federal authority under the FLSA was limited to overtime pay.

Berline said in calculating the amount of wages associated with the delayed payrolls, the Labor investigator included regular wages, holiday pay, and annual leave pay as well as overtime wages.

By including the regular wages, holiday pay and annual leave in its wage calculation, Berline said the Labor investigator concluded the amount of unpaid federal wages subject to the delayed payroll was \$309,816.21 for the 348 of its employees.

Subsequently, the Labor in-

vestigator prepared a document known as a Back Wage Settlement and Compliance Agreement (Compliance Agreement) which was forwarded to HKE on June 29, 2007.

Berline said the investigator informed HKE that if it did not sign the document by July 2, 2007, the case would be reported as a failure to pay.

He said the investigator also orally informed HKE on June 29, 2007, that if HKE desired to avoid the imposition of a civil monetary penalty then the company should sign the document agreeing to pay the \$309,816.21.

Berline said relying on the representations of the Labor investigator, HKE signed the compliance agreement on July 2, 2007 and forwarded it to the investigator.

Consistent with the investigator's oral representation, the compliance agreement did not provide for Labor assessing a

civil monetary penalty in connection with the May 2007 investigation and settlement.

Instead, a provision of the agreement provided that a civil monetary penalty may be assessed if future investigations revealed a FLSA violation.

A longer version of this story is available at www.saipantribune.com

JUDGE

From Page 3

the legislative process by signing the bills into law.

In the same decision, Wiseman denied the CNMI government's motion to dismiss Hunter's claims. The judge denied the CNMI Legislative Bureau's motion to dismiss the claims against Deleon Guerrero, Demapan, and Ogumoro.

Wiseman also denied Senate President Torres' motion to dismiss the claims against him.

Inos and the CNMI government, through assistant attorney general Reena J. Patel, moved to reconsider Wiseman's ruling.

Patel argued that there has been a change in the controlling law because "Public Law 18-56, repealed the two laws that serve as the basis for Hunter's complaint; and therefore, [sic] moots the relief sought against defendants Inos and the Commonwealth."

In an order Monday denying the motion for reconsideration, Wiseman said "the two laws that serve as the basis for plaintiff's complaint" are the laws at issue, but, as defendants suggest, the controlling law.

"Whether or not the Legislature repealed the laws at issue have no bearing on the legal standard for how a court should have analyzed defendants' Rule 12(b)(6) motion," he said.

JUSTICES

From Page 1

ion entered by Chief Justice Alexandro C. Castro, Associate Justice John A. Manglona, and Justice Pro Tem Timothy H. Bellas on Tuesday, Camacho's decision permitting CUC to sue was rational and thus they cannot grant the writ because Camacho did not commit a clear error.

With the high court's ruling, the Superior Court will set a status conference on Jan. 7, 2015, to set a trial date.

In its petition for writ of mandamus, the government through assistant attorney general David Lochabay, asked the high court to direct the trial court to vacate its order denying the government's motion

to dismiss for lack of capacity and grant a motion to dismiss for lack of capacity.

Mandamus refers to a discretionary writ that compels a government official or agency to perform a legally required, ministerial public duty.

The government argued that a writ of mandamus is proper because the trial court erred by concluding CUC has capacity to sue the government.

In his ruling, Camacho said the CNMI Legislature explicitly granted CUC the power to bring lawsuits, and specifically mandated that CUC bill government consumers for utility services.

Camacho made the determination in his order denying the CNMI government's motion to dismiss for lack of capacity CUC's lawsuit against the government.

In separate lawsuits filed last December, CUC, through counsel Michael White, also sued the Public School System and the CNMI government to collect utility billings.

White said PSS and the CNMI government are indebted to CUC, for utility services in the principal sum of \$5,936,931.55 and \$1,241,137 respectively together with pre-judgment interest.

The CNMI government, through assistant attorney general David Lochabay, moved to dismiss the lawsuit. He argued that CUC, as a governmental entity, lacks capacity to sue the CNMI government, CUC's creator.

CUC, through White, argued that the Legislature designed CUC to be a separate, autonomous entity, with the power to

recover the expenses of utility production from utility consumers, including the government.

In his ruling, Judge Camacho said under the express mandate of the Legislature in the Commonwealth Code, CUC has the capacity to bring this claim for non-payment of utilities against the Commonwealth.

In the high court's opinion, the justices said the Commonwealth points to three errors Camacho allegedly made.

The justices said the government argued that Camacho ignored the arm-of-the-state doctrine, disregarded the total effect of the executive orders that allegedly removed CUC's independent nature, and defining political subdivision too narrowly.

The justices, however, pointed out that they do not engage

with these contentions because, even if they agree with the government's position that the common law controls and CUC is a state entity, there is a rational argument that CUC has capacity to sue the Commonwealth.

The justices said the Commonwealth arguably created a contract by requiring CUC to bill the government for utilities, and at the same time "collect fees...from all customers."

The justices said a legitimate argument can be made that this is a contract: CUC provides utilities to the Commonwealth and, in exchange, the Commonwealth pays CUC.

Citing precedent, the justices said because arguably there is a contract, a court could fairly conclude CUC has a proprietary interest in the payment for utilities provided.

STAR

From Page 1

lenda Faasumalie on Tuesday, "no commuter operations have occurred on the site" for well over 14 to 15 years.

"In our airport layout plan approved by the FAA, those parking areas are clearly identified and there have been no parking in that area since it has been repurposed many years ago," she said.

GIAA has told SMA that they are not allowed to park at the terminal because of safety issues in regards to wingtip clearance hazards created by the construction of a parallel taxiway, according to SMA president Shaun Christian.

This taxiway, Taxiway Kilo, makes it so that "no aircraft could be parked on [the terminal's] adjoining apron," according to Charles H. Ada in a letter to SMA in September.

Ada has told Star Marianas that the area is closed and no aircraft can park in the area, but according to Christian, during their last meeting two weeks ago, they saw aircraft parked at

the same site.

Christian said that since that September letter STAR has documented instances of aircraft parked in the closed site. These pictures were submitted as part of STAR's formal complaint to the FAA but, according to Christian, the FAA has not responded directly to SMA on this evidence. *Saipan Tribune* learned that FAA would not consider their formal complaint, as an informal investigation is still underway.

In an interview, Atalig called the safety reasons GIAA has cited as "a total lie."

"Every single time I go to Guam, there is aircraft there parked [in that area]. They said it cannot be used as a commuter terminal because we cannot park there [as] they are using that [area] as traffic for jumbos...But that's not the case. If you go there and see for yourself, within a week you'll see a plane park," he said.

"There was a private plane parked in front of the commuter terminal three times as big as the 9-seater that we used to go there," he said.

For SMA's part, Christian

would like more clarity on this.

"Either say it's safe or it's not safe. It's either opened or closed. From our perspective, it sure didn't seem to be unsafe, and nor did it seem to be closed," he said.

SMA brought up the issue with GIAA, but according to Christian they were told that until GIAA paints "Xs" there, they are still letting aircraft in.

He said normally if airports close off an area they are required to paint Xs indicating that it is an unsafe area to taxi in or park in. But just because there are painted Xs on the ground doesn't mean the area is unsafe, he added.

Atalig and SMA learned that these markings will be drawn in coming weeks, but to Atalig, GIAA's plan to draw lines that justify the area for bigger planes is "an intentional plan to suppress commuter traffic."

The Marinas Visitors Authority, in its most recent tourism master plan in 2012, cited "the lack of adequate transportation" that "has resulted in a severe economic depression" for Rota.

Atalig indicated that this depression has continued for Rota

after the CNMI lost another airline when Freedom Air ceased its flights earlier this year.

He said the local Rota people will attest that "the present situation is hell." He said lack of reliable flights kills the economy of the island.

He said tour agents do not want to send tourists to Rota because there is no guarantee for reliable transportation back to Saipan or Guam the same day. Before, he said, tourists would spend a day tour on Rota before heading back to Saipan or Guam.

But with the current situation, "not one tour company is interested in the market," he claimed.

"If STAR operated between Guam and Rota, they would not be subjected to TSA screening, therefore...there will be a free flow of traffic," he said.

"I consider the present situation a trade barrier with respect to tourists, and also local people traveling between the islands."

Right now, the facility proposed for STAR use is a "Yellow Cargo Building." Atalig expressed his frustration with the building as he claims it does

not have restroom, a waiting lounge, or amenities for the elderly or the disabled.

Saipan Tribune learned that GIAA will be "going out to bid" on the renovation for the facility, but the timeline for that appears indefinite heading into the New Year. The proposed facility is a vacant warehouse type space and rooms suitable for offices.

"[The facility] would need to be entirely renovated for the... charter services that Star Marianas proposes to provide," according to GIAA's Faasumalie.

"The timeline [for renovation] is entirely dependent upon the consensus of regulatory parties to the design, and subject to the Government of Guam procurement procedures for solicitation of construction services which dictates specific times for advertisement and open solicitation, review of bids or proposals and negotiation of services/fees, if any," she told *Saipan Tribune*.

STAR would like CNMI leaders to assist in their efforts to gain access to Guam. Both Atalig and Christian have engaged in leadership meetings with GIAA, but what seems to

happen, according to Christian, is that the Guam and Rota leaders have been pushed by GIAA to meet separately.

Atalig, who managed to attend both meetings, attested to the same. He said "the politicians were not allowed to go into the meeting with" Guam airport officials.

Christian said the last time they tried a leadership meeting they "segregated the politicians away from the airport and airlines-side of the meeting."

In an interview, Rep. Lorenzo Guerrero (Ind-Saipan), House Public Utilities, Transportation, and Communications chair, said he would like to sit down with STAR to "clarify the issues." He said he hopes for things to be settled in a "diplomatic" manner.

Christian agreed, and indicated that he would be happy to meet with Guerrero.

"We're trying not to fight with the airport...It doesn't work well with any respect especially ours, because we worry about retaliation...if the leadership wants to take it on and assist us, we'd be very happy for the help," he said.



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CHCC OFFICIALS TRADE ACCUSATIONS

'It's a shame fighting on the floor'

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. CEO Esther Muna's public feud with the corporation's board of trustees spilled out from the boardroom and into the floor of the House of Representatives last Tuesday during the lower chamber's final session of the 18th Legislature.

It became so testy at one point that both House Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero (Ind-Saipan) and floor leader Ralph Demapan (R-Saipan) asked board chair Joaquin Torres to observe and respect the House's rules.

Rep. Roman Benavente (Ind-Saipan) was also so incensed with the infighting among the islands' healthcare executives that the Precinct 1 lawmaker scolded both Muna and Torres for their "unprofessional behavior."

Muna and Torres were on Capital Hill earlier this week to voice their opinions on Senate Bill 18-52, which proposes to change the corporation's advisory board into a governing board.

The CHCC board chair, who



Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. CEO Esther Muna, second from left, speaks during a House of Representatives session on Tuesday. Rightmost is CHCC board chair Joaquin Torres.

its bank account. To satisfy its reckless spending habit, it has taken money for CHCC operation from the Kagman Community Health Center without approval of the Kagman board, a violation of the federal grant agreement," he said.

Torres added that CHCC is not professionally managed because the recruitment and selection of key management personnel are based on factors other than qualifications or merit.

He added that Muna is opposed to the bill because its passage will make her lose her \$100,000 annual salary, travel perks, 24-hour use of an SUV, and other perks.

Before Torres took the podium, an already emotional Muna made her position known that she and the CHCC administration opposes S.B. 18-52.

"I oppose this bill because it places the decision of our people's health in the hands of unqualified individuals, it risks the hospital in losing its [Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services] certification, guaranteeing over \$20 million in funding and ensuring quality and safety for our patients, and it does not ensure the protection of everyone's right to quality healthcare."

Muna added that it is also troubling to see that S.B. 18-52 will remove the voting power of actually qualified people such as herself and the Director of Medical Affairs and leave it in the hands of "truly unqualified people."

"This is not only irresponsible but also detrimental to the health of the CNMI community. Please do not let the issues of what was found in Sept. 25, 2012, by CMS resurrect and create harm to our people. During this time, the current members of the advisory board were actually acting as if they

See SHAME on Page 8



REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

MVA-RFP-15-2320

For: MARPI MAINTENANCE SERVICE

Closing Date: **January 23, 2015** Time: 3:00 p.m.

Submit sealed proposals to: Marianas Visitors Authority
P.O. Box 500861 CK, Saipan, MP 96950

Interested parties may pick up the scope of work at the **Marianas Visitors Authority** office between 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., (closed 12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.) Monday to Friday, except holidays or by visiting the **MVA** website at www.mymarianas.com.

/s/ Marian Aldan-Pierce
MVA Chair, Board of Directors

/s/ PERRY P. TENORIO
Managing Director



REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

MVA-RFP-15-2321

For: **GARAPAN AREA TRASH COLLECTION SERVICE**

Closing Date: **January 9, 2015**

Time: 3:00 p.m.

Submit sealed proposals to: Marianas Visitors Authority
P.O. Box 500861 CK
Saipan, MP 96950

Interested parties may pick up the scope of work at the Marianas Visitors Authority office between 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., (closed 12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.) Monday to Friday, except holidays or by visiting the MVA website at www.mymarianas.com.

/s/ Marian Aldan-Pierce
MVA Chair, Board of Directors

/s/ PERRY P. TENORIO
Managing Director

was accompanied to the session by vice chair Pedro Dela Cruz, fired the first barrage when he spoke during the comments portion of the House session.

"CHCC today is in financial disaster because the current regime refuses or is grossly negligent and lethargic in its collection efforts of its receivables. The current regime has incurred deficits over \$6 million in fiscal years 2013 and 2014. When it is applied for a loan with [Marianas Public Lands Trust] earlier this year, MPLT found that CHCC had only \$2,600 in



The Commonwealth Cancer Association General Membership Meeting

All friends, volunteers, partners, and clients of the Commonwealth Cancer Association (CCA), and all members of the community are invited to the general membership meeting on Thursday, January 15, 2015 at 5:30 p.m. at the CCA conference room in Gualo Rai.

The agenda will include the 2014 annual report of the President and Treasurer, election of four Board members and an opportunity for public comments. Nominations for board members will be accepted in advance and on the floor during the meeting.

To submit a board nomination, or for more information contact CCA at 682-0050 or email at ccamarianas@gmail.com.



NOTICE OF MEETING NORTHERN MARIANAS COLLEGE BOARD OF REGENTS' SPECIAL MEETING

Date: Tuesday, January 06, 2015
Time: 10:00a.m.
Place: Board of Regents Conference Room
Saipan Campus

AGENDA

- I. **Call Meeting to Order (10:00a.m - 10:05a.m)**
 - a. Roll Call
 - b. Review and Adoption of Agenda
- II. **Public Comment Period:** Individuals may orally testify on items on the agenda during the Public Comment Period. Written testimony is also accepted. Testifiers are requested to limit their testimony to five (5) minutes (10:05a.m - 10:15a.m).
- III. **Old Business (10:15a.m - 11:30a.m)**
 - a. Election of Officers
- IV. **New Business**
 - a. Facility Financing (USDA) / Local
- V. **Executive Session** (At any time during the scheduled meeting of the Board of Regents may be required to enter into executive session to discuss matters deemed privileged and confidential)
 - a. President's Annual Evaluation
 - b. Personnel Matters
- VI. **Adjournment (11:30a.m)**

/s/ Frank M. Rabauliman
BOR Chairperson

Date: December 31, 2014

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Maxima SV Sport	EC457171	Mocha	\$4,000.00
Pathfinder Platinum	EC65	Gray	\$5,000.00

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Former NMC CFO Madriaga joins OPA

Former Northern Marianas College chief financial officer Roger Madriaga has joined the Office of the Public Auditor.

Madriaga, who also used to be the manager of Administration and Operations at the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, joined OPA last Nov. 10.

OPA said it is pleased to add Madriaga to its team, adding that his extensive financial, federal grants, and management background will be an asset to the agency.

"Madriaga offers a considerable amount of knowledge in government accounting and will assist OPA with managing its fiscal affairs and other critical projects," said OPA.

The longtime CNMI resident graduated with a master's degree in business administration with an emphasis in accounting from the University of Hawaii at Manoa in 1994. Prior to his graduate studies, he earned two bachelor's degrees—one in business administration

and another in social sciences—from University of Hawaii at Hilo.

Aside from CFO of NMC, Madriaga had worked as the college's director, associate director for the Office of Planning, Evaluation, and Grants, and assistant director for the Office of Research, Planning and Evaluation.

During his tenure at NMC, Madriaga was instrumental in implementing rigorous financial controls and cost efficiencies as well as compliance with

federal and CNMI and board policies. He was also part of a working group that developed the college's first budget manual.

Madriaga's eight years at OVR saw him assisting in overseeing the agency's budgeting processes, planning activities, research and evaluation functions, human resource management, financial management, audit resolutions, and program assessment activities.

OPA is an independent agency of the

Commonwealth government tasked with the responsibility to audit the receipt, possession, and disbursement of public funds and to perform such other duties as required by law.

Public Auditor Michael Pai, who was sworn in for another six-year term at the helm of OPA last Dec. 18, heads it. This came after the House of Representatives and the Senate unanimously approved his reappointment last November. *(Mark Rabago)*

GRANDPA

From Page 2

ments" to mean before opening statements.

The justices said they agree with Santos' argument because "it is common ground that [Federal Rule of Criminal Procedure 30] requires definitive instructions after the close of the proof."

The justices said that, while Sato correctly highlights the court erred, Santos' argument does not present grounds for reversal because he waived by failing to present it in his

opening brief.

Santos also contended that the presence of a victim advocate near the witness is an error because there is no authorization for the practice and the court failed to take the requisite steps before allowing the accommodation.

The justices ruled that a victim advocate can accompany a witness to the stand only after the court has made a finding of need for the accommodation. The justices said the court determined a victim advocate was appropriate without seeing or talking to the witness.

They said the only evidence

offered to support that decision was the government's assertion that the victim was young and the subject matter of her testimony could be embarrassing.

Notably absent, the justices said, were any details about the girl that would indicate she had a specific need for an accommodation and confirmation of the court's finding of need by actually discussing the matter with the girl when she did come to the courtroom.

The justices said because the trial court did not hear or consider evidence on the girl's particular needs, there was not

an adequate basis to justify a finding of need for her accommodation.

The justices said they must determine whether the government has established the court committed harmless error by allowing the victim advocate to accompany the girl to the witness stand.

The justices said the Commonwealth is unable to prove it is more probable than not that the girl's testimony was not bolstered.

Second, the justices said, the judge failed to give an instruction that would cure the potential harm.

Ordinarily, the justice said, a judge can prevent harm from improper bolstering by instructing the jury to disregard the presence of a victim advocate when making a credibility determination.

Here, the justices said, the judge did not tell the jury to make their credibility determinations without considering the victim advocate's presence before the girl testified, immediately after she testified, or before the jury retired to deliberate.

Therefore, they said, the government cannot rely on the judge's jury instructions to dem-

onstrate the error was harmless.

Third, the justices said, the government cannot show there was sufficient evidence to convict Santos notwithstanding the girl's testimony.

"Her testimony was essential to the case because the case turned on whether the jury believed her testimony," the justices said, adding that no other witness independently verified that Santos improperly touched the girl.

Accordingly, they said, the government cannot show that Santos would have been convicted if the jury did not believe the girl's testimony.

SHAME

From Page 6

were a governing board. They were making decisions for the CEO then and the hospital not only was at the highest risk of termination, CMS found that there was harm and death to patients because the quality of care was almost non-existent. Our people deserve more than that!" said Muna.

At one point during the discussion of the bill, Torres called former DMA Dr. Sherleen Osman a pathological liar.

"That a lie! You're a pathological liar!" the board chair stated when Osman told House members that before Muna became CEO the hospi-

tal staff's morale was so low that a lot of doctors quit and the hospital's CMS certification will be revoked.

The exchange resulted in House Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero and floor leader Ralph Demapan calling for both camps to calm down and that order be restored in the session.

The relationship between Muna and Torres has become so strained that the former has also not called for a board meeting since May.

Torres alleges that Muna hasn't called one because they could vote her out of office because the board is mandated to conduct an evaluation of her performance annually.

Muna, for her part, said they stopped meeting because it was

"just getting out of control" with eight-hour board meetings on back-to-back days.

In addition, the passage of a resolution credentialing a physician Muna already essentially fired from CHCC soured the relationship between Muna and the board of trustees.

"You're taking about a faction. Yes, there's a faction," she said, adding that she continues to hold on to the Office of the Attorney General's opinion that the board of trustees is just an advisory board. Current DMA Dr. John Doyle accompanied Muna and Osman to the House session.

Muna also debunked Torres and Dela Cruz's allegations that she took money from the Kagman Community Health Center,

saying that it was CHCC's money to begin with and it was just a miscommunication that made KCHC think it was theirs.

She said Torres and Dela Cruz are just throwing allegations left and right at her in an effort to boot her out of CHCC.

Rep. Roman Benavente, meanwhile, scolded the CHCC administration board and administration for letting their emotions get the better of them during the House session yesterday.

"I know all of you guys are working together. I would like to pose this question. First, to the board members: Do you really care about the existence of the hospital and the reality of what our people really need? Do you really feel in your heart,

as a professional, operating the hospital and managing it to the best interest of the people and accommodate the needs of the people? It's a shame [you're] fighting on the floor!"

Torres answered by saying, "We have not done enough and we need to do more."

Muna, meanwhile, said it's not about her questioning whether CHCC needs a governing body.

"As you said, we can definitely work together but obviously the way it is now, we can't. It's very sad. When they're trying to force things on operations, that's why I'm against this bill. Take a look at the current members and make the decision not based on me but look at it as overall."

Deleon Guerrero, for his part, advised the board and Muna to work together. "If we do good, everyone benefits. If we do bad, everyone suffers"

Torres, meanwhile, reiterated that S.B. 18-52 is a step in the right direction, as its passage will result in more accountability, competency, and transparency at CHCC.

"It will provide effective governance and a sound legal structure that encourages innovation and reform, both of which are essential elements of survival for CHCC. The legislation will do it and more."

In the end, the House voted to refer S.B. 18-52 back to the Committee on Health and Welfare. Most likely it will be reintroduced in the 19th Legislature.

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NMHC hopes Inos OKs bill exempting agency from CAA

The Northern Marianas Housing Corp. hopes that Gov. Eloy S. Inos will affix his signature to House Bill 18-211, which passed the Senate last week. That bill seeks to exempt NMHC from the salary limitations imposed by the Compensation Adjustment Act.

The measure states that the U.S. Department of Housing

and Urban Development requires all Public Housing Authorities like NMHC "to provide on an annual basis data on the compensation for their top 5 highest compensated employees to ensure that pay ranges are commensurate with the size and number of housing units in housing authorities in uniformity with federal

standards."

While the agency is extremely pleased with the passage of House Bill 18-211, NMHC director Jesse Palacios hopes the measure will become law.

"I want to thank the House

and the Senate for passing the bill. It's really more for NMHC to keep in line with other housing agencies that are our size. I hope the governor will sign it as well."

Palacios said keeping NMHC salaries in line with federal standards is important in retaining his staff.

"It's really good for our staff...good for our staff who have the training, experience, and institutional knowledge. We will now be able to retain them rather than see them look for other jobs with higher pay. It's more of continuity for us, too. We invested in our staff so we want our staff to also remain at NMHC," he said.

Palacios said just the past couple of years NMHC has lost three of their staff that have master's degrees because

of the agency's current low salaries.

Rep. John Paul Sablan (R-Saipan), who along with Reps. Roman C. Benavente (Ind-Saipan), Lorenzo I. Deleon Guerrero (Ind-Saipan), Janet U. Maratita (Ind-Saipan), and Ralph N. Yumul (Ind-Saipan) introduced the bill, said he sees nothing wrong with the bill.

"The program [NMHC] is 100 percent federally funded so I don't see anything wrong. It doesn't hurt our local coffers. It will help our local economy because staff of NMHC will use their money here. If it's allowed by personnel operations funds we should capitalize on it," he said.

HB 18-211 passed the House of Representatives last Nov. 25 on first and final reading. *(Mark Rabago)*

House, Senate to *sine die* next week

The 18th Legislature will formally fold up next week with the House of Representatives having its *sine die* on Tuesday, Jan. 6, while the Senate will have its own on Thursday, Jan. 8. Both chambers will start their final sessions beginning 10am.

Of the 20 members of the 18th House of Representatives, only 12 will be returning in the 19th House—House Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero (Ind-Saipan), floor leader Rafael S. Demapan (R-Saipan), and Reps. Anthony T. Benavente (Ind-Saipan), Roman C. Benavente (Ind-Saipan), George N. Camacho (R-Saipan), Lorenzo I. Deleon Guerrero (Ind-Saipan), Felicidad T. Ogumoro (R-Saipan), Antonio P. Sablan (Ind-Saipan), John Paul Sablan (R-Saipan), Ramon A. Tebuteb (Ind-Saipan), Edmund S. Vilagomez (Ind-Saipan), and Ralph N. Yumul (Ind-Saipan).

Vice Speaker Francisco S. Dela Cruz (Ind-Saipan) and Reps. Antonio R. Agulto (Ind-Saipan), Christopher D. Leon Guerrero (Ind-Saipan), Mariano Taitano (Ind-Saipan), and Richard B. Seman (R-Saipan) all lost their reelection bids at the House, while Janet U. Maratita (Ind-Saipan)

Navy, Air Force training at FDM

ASAN, Guam—The U.S. Navy and U.S. Air Force will conduct training at the island of Farallon de Medinilla during the following dates and times:

- Jan. 5 from 9:30am to 5pm
- Jan. 6 from 9:30am to 4pm
- Jan. 8 from 9:30am to 4:30pm and 5:30-10:30pm

The general public, especially fishermen, commercial pilots and marine tour operators, are advised to stay clear from the area during the date and time indicated.

The general location of the training on the island of Farallon de Medinilla will be on a 10-nautical mile radius on all quadrants. Farallon de Medinilla plays a special and unique role in national defense because its location provides frequent access that supports training requirements. In addition, the air and sea space in the Farallon provides sufficient room for the many different attack profiles necessary to replicate training opportunities for aircraft in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. *(PR)*

BIRTHDAY SHOUTOUTS



Advanced happy 5th birthday to our lil' magas, Kayven Cruz. You have grown to be a fine and handsome young man. May your day be filled with lots of joy, love, prosperity and happiness. We love you. Love Mommy, Daddy and your lil' brother Junior.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



To a wonderful woman, an amazing mother and a loving wife, may all your wishes and desires be fulfilled this day and for all the days to come! Happy advance birthday going out to Vanessa Kisa-Camacho. God bless, cheers and we love you. Greetings coming out from Shawn and Shale.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

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PUBLIC NOTICE

Pursuant to Public Law 8-41, the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) Board of Directors, through its Vice Chairman of the Board, is hereby giving notice that a Special Board Meeting is scheduled on **Wednesday, January 7, 2015 at 10:00 a.m. at the NMHC's Conference Room, Garapan, Saipan.** The public is welcome to submit written or oral comments regarding the agenda below. Individuals interested in attending the meeting and needing special accommodations are requested to contact NMHC in advance.

I. PRELIMINARY MATTERS

- a. Call to Order
- b. Roll Call
- c. Adoption of Agenda

II. PUBLIC COMMENTS

III. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Garapan Annex RFP

IV. OLD BUSINESS

V. LEGAL COUNSEL'S PENDING/ONGOING REPORT

VI. EXECUTIVE SESSION

VII. OTHER MATTERS

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

(Note: Pursuant to Public Law 8-41, Section 13(a) (7) and Section 13(c), the Board may vote to meet in executive session.)

/s/
TOM GLENN A. QUITUGUA
Vice Chairman of the Board



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Opinion

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THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
Volume XXV, Issue No. 1Published daily at 2/F JP Center,
Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, CNMI
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EDITORIAL

On New Year's Day, we contemplate time



New Year's Day is a holiday to mull where you've been and are going, and to consider collective reformation. Or you can spend it watching football games.

New Year's Day is a holiday of time. It marks another click on the odometer. Some people have lots of miles left. Others measure their lives in tenths of a mile and are happy for it.

Time is fungible, relative and inexorable.

As much as we want to pretend that the end is not in sight, time will not be ignored.

Geoffrey Chaucer once said that time and tide wait for no man. Chaucer lived in the 14th century, when, if one lived to be 57, as he did, the waves washed in early. In the 21st century, many of us mull our midlife crises at 57.

On New Year's Day, culture forces a one-day gut check: Where have I been? What am I doing? Where am I going?

It's a useful exercise, but a little scary, too. What, exactly, should you be doing? Unloading planes full of medical supplies in some impoverished country? Should you put more money in the IRA?

Should you go to law school or learn how to knit? Should you spend more time reading the great books, so you can know Chaucer better? Should you paint your house and organize your garage, or binge-watch the latest Netflix series, or watch bowl games and call it a day?

The passage of another year and arrival of a new year causes many people to contemplate reform: they will quit doing this or that, or start doing something or the other. Sometimes it works. Time doesn't care. It just keeps ticking forward. It's a shot clock you hear with a jarring buzzer.

New Year's Day forces individual assessments, and collective reflection: Can we band together to stop global warming, inhumanity and suffering? Is there time enough to rescue society? Can we feed the world, end genocide and stop Ebola's spread?

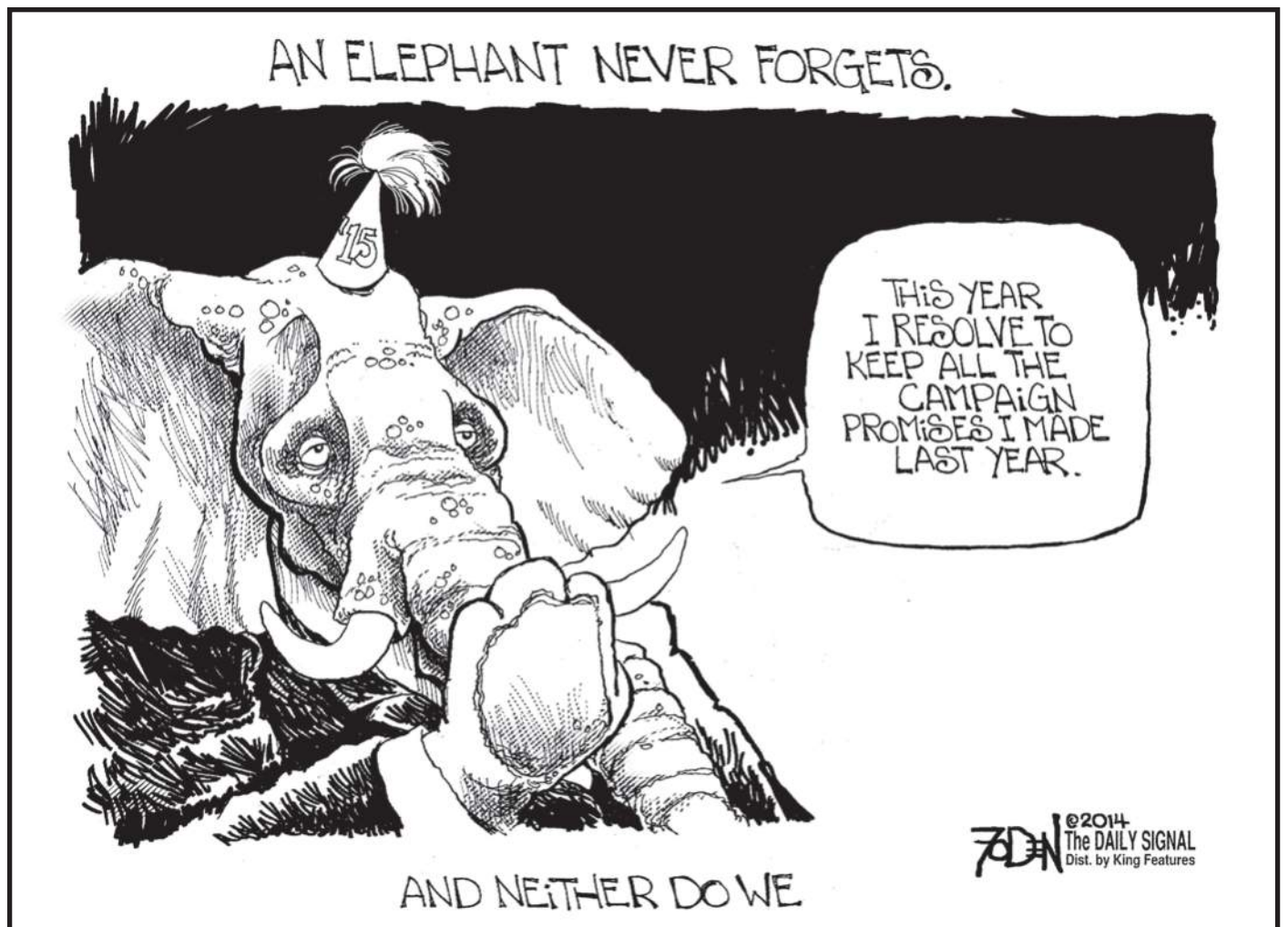
We use time to chart progress; it does march onward. In the United States, the most diverse nation the world has known, we ask ourselves what progress we have made on relations among the races this past year.

What about our role in the world? We're still stuck in the ancient rivalries of the Middle East, still dependent on its oil, and don't seem to be experiencing forward motion at all. Last year, climate change became ever more evident, and the earth has passed 400 parts per million on carbon. We've never been here before. Is our time to act past?

Again, the clock. Can we turn it back on climate change? Can we move it forward on race? Do we accept stuck hands in Afghanistan, Syria, and the West Bank?

California, the state that lionizes progress, has collectively

See NEW YEAR'S on Next Page



The Year to Come

We anticipate a year of writing, though 2015 requires of us only weekly Tribune articles by the end of January before we call it quits. A decade of "opinionating" at ST with a brief stint on the pages of Marianas Variety next-door (before my attention was called to the serious awkwardness of writing in two competing dailies) was long enough to have stepped on everyone's toes!

Don't matter now. To speculate on what might have transpired if I stood my ground on writing in two papers is fruitless, if even possible. In the stoic stance appropriate for the age, I follow the insight of Andrew Bernstein's phrasing in his book, *The End of Stress*: "We are tiny specks of presumption suspended in a vast universe of uncertainty." Or to the Buddhists' wisdom that enlightenment happens as an accident; meditation does not make enlightenment happen but makes the postulant prone to the accident. I tend to be accident-prone!

It is the Year-to-Come that is on our plate at the moment and though prognosticating had not been one of my strong suits, I can at least declare what I intend to do. I take the great celebration of the incredible wellness of being to heart, forsaking Kierkegaard's image of Sickness Unto Death that thrives on the losing story that "the world sucks." The enabling choice is the awesomeness of life as is.

Joyce Marshall of the Realistic Living Institute pulled out a set of vows from a Buddhist ritual that she made into her own interreligious spin as *Relating to the Mystery of Life*. With a tweak of terms, I made it my own as well, my Vows to the Wellness Unto Life.

*The past is done. I vow to let it go.
The future is coming. I vow to open it.
The present is a gift. I vow to receive it.
My life is given. I vow to embrace it.*

*Illusions are inexhaustible. I vow to forsake them.
The deluded are numberless. I vow to liberate them.
Injustices are rampant. I vow to rectify them.
Earth restoration is critical. I vow to enrich it.*

*Spirit practices are plenty. I vow to know them.
The sound of silence is deafening. I vow to trust it.
Awesome fullness is overwhelming. I vow to love it.
Realistic living is miraculous. I vow to choose it.*

2015 marks another turn in my journey. January is more than the end of this column. It is a serious choice to go fulltime on my seven-year itch of writing an 86-year journey experience before I go quietly into the night. "On what?" a friend asked. "On a single, solitary selfie trek into wellness unto life, silly."

The response is not just being cute. It is an affirmation of the cruciality of consciousness of self as the beginning point of wisdom.

By **JAIME VERGARA**
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Jaime Vergara previously taught at SVES in the CNMI. A peripatetic pedagogue, he last taught in China but makes Honolulu, Shenyang, and Saipan home. He can be reached at pinoypanda2031@aol.com.



Deep is the insight of the despair Kierkegaard wrote about in *Sickness Unto Death*, but that was against a bias of fear on the infinite, the mysterious, and the real, all writ in capital letters, experienced in dread and fascination, an internal state of being. "The Fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom," the psalmist of old chanted. Foisting "Fear Not" is Bishop Spong's message this season.

The self of our beginnings is located in space, bookended in time, measured at 86 turns of the planet around the sun on mine. At the center of it is the aware self who deigns to choose the fullness of its finite awareness; temporal but known, and tangibly real in its concrete relations with other bodily incarnate beings.

The self is that creature experienced by a body's "five senses," with a reflexive capacity to emote in the poetry and poesy of the feelings they entail, then discourses in words and numbers from a mind that communicates to others as well as relate to its own integrated system of cognition, and then intentionally develop patterns and processes of behavior that encourage the reflex to be protective of survival, and the consciousness of relations to others. I am talking about many layers of consciousness that makes a self conscious of itself and conscious of the process of being conscious of itself.

"The self is a relation which relates itself to its own self, or it is that in the relation that the relation relates itself to its own self; the self is not the relation but that the relation relates itself to its own self," wrote the Dane.

Not clear yet? Well, me knowing me is an occasion of awe (the network of nerves alone beats anything AT&T can put together) on the awesome (86 years of history, mystery, and the sheer gift that I am) that may gather a group of awed ones (folks who also know themselves to be "one, unique, unrepeatable gifts of life in history, of which there has never been one like each before, and never be another one again") to ritualize that sense of awe-fullness. We can do this sans extrapolating an external reality with capital letters *deus ex machina*, requiring a redeemer to save us from the debilitating case of being at a disadvantage (*dejado*) at the gate of beginnings!

Life and the world do not suck; but relating to it is awesome, llamado en la puerta! That's realistic living in the Year to Come.

Happy Flu Year!

The best way to start a new year is with a winning lottery ticket. I sure failed on that note, but I managed to spend the holidays largely unplugged from the world and its concerns, which was a winning move in its own right. So don't ask me what's going on, I pretty much don't know. Still, a few items have come my way, and I'll note a few of them:

1). The year 2014 didn't go out with a bang. It went out with a sneeze. And it sprayed its cooties all over 2015. Poor 2015, it never had a chance.

And neither did many of us, for that matter, which is why NyQuil probably out-sold champagne in many places. Cheers, and "Happy Flu Year!"

Although the yearly cycle of flu worries often point to Asia (I've heard of the Hong Kong flu, but never the Wichita flu), the mainland U.S. seems like it's getting a lot of the attention this time around. The largest national newspapers, the *Wall Street Journal* and *USA Today*, are running pretty serious stories about this, and local news sources all over the place are carrying stories as well.

A couple of days it was declared an epidemic in the U.S.

This flu crossed paths with some family and friends, and it sure is a doozy. The strain at issue apparently did an end-run around the vaccination recipe this year; such are the ways of mutation and natural selection. Slippery little bugger, this flu.

And it can be a tenacious one, too. I know a few people, young and strong, who have been grappling with this doggone bug for weeks.

Rebuilding bridge of hope

If there's anything strangely definitive in recent past it's the spout of indigenous rights to self-government. It's bad enough that it is a protracted process. But we come along with grand *mañana*, disoriented and noncommittal, adding fuel to fire. It dies out quickly like a candle in the wind. Who needs a New Year's resolution?

The march turns snail-like because it involves "we the people." And though democratic elections provide a legal launching pad to throw out the bums, it's the only vehicle available to gradually straighten and strengthen strong governance. As you can see, there remains a lot of public education to bring our people up to speed with issues before them.

We relish spouting declamatory platitudes about it. Ironically, we refuse to put our best foot forward to address its very essence. Habitual and shopworn! Do we sleepwalk it as though we're brain dead? Call it the purgatory or indigenous hellish hole of indecisions!

The health of our people has degenerated beyond comprehension with Type II diabetes skyrocketing, including renal or kidney failure. Over 300 go through dialysis weekly, not to mention increases in chronic heart and cancer issues. Is this why the Legislature refuses to grant CHC operational funds of some \$38 million?

Policymaking has also devolved into the abyss of humiliation. The Legislature impeached a former governor for "lack of transparency." Yet it violated its golden rule, sporting how to tiptoe casino through both chambers to prevent public participation. Asinine! Whatever happened to conscientious leadership?

The rush is the same as cows breaking out of the front gate destroying nearby farms. There's obviously the lack of percipien-cy—ability to understand issues—as to overlook due diligence. It approved casino, ignoring to resolve land and basic infrastructure needs. Is advancing blindly to the rear the new mode of legislating? Embarrassing!

Then there's the arbitrary imposition of the social definition of landownership per proponents of Article 12. Why present it as though legally factual when it is simply a view? Isn't landownership individually owned and fully protected by the U.S. Constitu-

NEW YEAR'S

From Page 10

struggled back from bad economic times, though the coast still does better than the Central Valley. Maybe, it's only a matter of time that the area will come back, too.

We have a governor whose public life spans five decades, a lifetime for many but, of course, it is a blip. Jerry Brown, too, is time-conscious: he's thinking about big projects and youthful Supreme Court appointees.

The way America celebrates New Year's Eve is fascinating: a countdown, a falling ball in Times Square in New York, and then, a national paroxysm of celebration at midnight.

After that, maybe read a little Chaucer and then to bed. We have to get up in the morning. Time to get up and ignore time for another year. Nothing we can do about it. Oh, and the tide is out of your hands, too.

I asked a nurse in management about this stuff. She told me that she sees the specter of pneumonia as the biggest threat here, particularly for folks who already have health vulnerabilities, but she also said it's too early to tell if this flu season is really going to be any worse than average.

2). There's a bit of comet fever in the air again, this time due to Comet Lovejoy, or, if we want to sound fancier, C/2014 Q2. It's been easy enough to catch in telescopes, and my pals and I have done that, but reports are that it may get naked-eye visible in the coming week. Saipan is very much in the running for this action.

I don't know if I'll dedicate more ink to it next week. For now I'll just offer a heads-up since, if you're interested, the Web is alive with news about it.

I'll note that the comet in the general neighborhood of Rigel, a bright star in the constellation Orion. Rigel is Orion's foot. Whether naked-eye visible or not, Comet Lovejoy should be a juicy binocular object, so if you can scrounge a pair of binocs over the next week or so, you should be well-rewarded for the effort.

This part of the sky is in the low eastern sky in early evening. So this isn't a case where you have to put on a pot of coffee at 3am in order to see some cosmic eye candy.

All comets are moving relative to the backdrop of the stars, so Lovejoy and Rigel won't have the same relative arrangement from one night to the next. But, again, the Web is the answer here; it has charts that can convey in a glance what would take a lot of blah-

tion? So what else is there to discuss regarding my rights to final disposition of my land?

The term "economy" is a mouthwash the "we few" politicians and loyalists discuss with grand disorientation. You break the concept down and it simply means money. The greater question is: Would anything be accomplished in stride to improve salaries stagnant for years or would it stay basically unfulfilled? Strategic socio-economic planning is in order to grow the economy lest salary stagnates or stays the same for another decade.

A fickle single-legged economy isn't going to cut it either and not when we're obviously struggling to pay off court-stipulated obligations with CUC and the settlement fund. The NMI would be swimming upstream most of the way. Just healthy inaugural issues to glimpse beyond political formality. There's still an opportunity to begin rebuilding the bridge of hope.

Chinese U.S. investment

Information that some 100 million wealthy Chinese folks leave the country in search of new homes and education opportunities abroad had my hopes high that the NMI would benefit from it.

My hope was dashed by news reports that our Chinese friends have been buying premium real estate across the country, USA. There's the new incentive to buy real estate beyond prestigious addresses: the new 10-year visa for business travel and tourism, and the five-year visa for overseas study.

Thus, friendship begins new relationships among two of the most powerful countries in the world. Business travel and tourism should explode up ahead across the fruited plain. Here at home I've been assigned to bite my fingernails.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Support this pioneering business

If we all can remember it, Borja Funeral Home has worked well with our community. They're our long-standing partner. Their reputation is untarnished.

We all can attest to that.

For many years now, they were there for this community standing up to the test of time. When our economy was faltering, they put up with the challenge and never gave up, while other business just packed up and left.

What they are to us represents one important attitude that we should even support rather than question. They remained committed to invest more by providing for newer services. This direction that Borja Funeral Home is taking will be greatly beneficial to our families, loved ones, and friends.

We should be proud and be humbled that one of our local businesses continues to survive and flourish, and ready to offer a critical and needed service to our small community.

Its planned investment by adding a crematory and relocating back to Chalan Kanoa right next to our Lady of Mount Carmel Cathedral and our largest public cemetery must be welcomed, especially during this challenging times, when what we all most desire is to do our best and give our best, for ourselves, for our families and loved ones.

By ED STEPHENS

Special to the Saipan Tribune



Visit Ed Stephens Jr. at EdStephensJr.com.
His column runs every Friday.

blah-blah here to express.

Unfortunately, the moon will be washing things out a bit with its light, but it shouldn't be a deal-killer in this case.

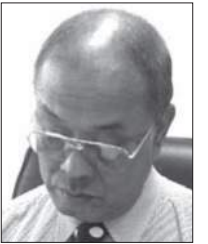
Here's something cool: The comet was discovered by an amateur (Terry Lovejoy, of Australia) using a fairly small telescope (8 inches). Comet-hunters have a long history of discovering a lot of stuff, not just comets.

3). A manager in a large company told me that upon returning to the office after a one-week Christmas vacation, it took her three hours to plow through her backlog of email.

She reports that the equivalent task in pre-cyber days would have taken 30 minutes, at most. Here's my beach chair thought on the topic: Email is essentially free, but, paradoxically, this is what makes the "second-order" costs so high.

By JOHN S. DELROSARIO JR.

Special to the Saipan Tribune



John DelRosario Jr. is a former publisher of the Saipan Tribune and a former secretary of the Department of Public Lands.

"Juwai, which means 'home away' in Mandarin, is a Chinese website for real estate buyers, headquartered in Shanghai, with another office in Hong Kong and one planned for Beijing, wrote William Hennessey of New York.

"Here is the U.S. government working with the China government on providing a jurisdictional incentive to encourage consumers to engage," Taylor said of the new visas. "We think that's the future of the world."

"Juwai's data show that 60 percent of affluent Chinese citizens are considering moving overseas, and 85 percent of that same demographic want to educate their children away from home. The U.S. is their top destination.

"The average price of properties that users inquire about is \$1.17 million, but they have budgets for purchases about \$3 million on average, according to Juwai.

"The U.S. city with the most Chinese investment in real estate is Los Angeles, followed by New York, Atherton, California (an affluent Silicon Valley suburb), San Francisco and Dallas, according to Juwai." Would any of these folks invest here?

The way our homes and businesses have been set up is especially unique on its own. It goes back for decades now when following the war and other distinctive circumstances led to how Saipan is designed today.

In particular, how in between homes/residential houses we see business establishments. This isn't only tradition but an aged-old practice wherein all of those who witnessed how Saipan has transitioned from then to where it is today is because we all coexisted to support each other.

The CK area was where we all first came to witness how the mix of residential and business co-existed without any misgivings and opposites. Borja Funeral Home, as the former Pacifica Funeral Service, was among the pioneer locally-owned businesses that worked well with our small community. They were first located in the Chalan Kanoa area.

It was during the 1980s when the CK area began to flourish and welcome business activities with the establishments of hotels, restaurants, boutiques, beauty shops, banks, and automotive shops. Borja Funeral Home was there and worked well with these businesses with the strong support of our community.

We did it before. Why can't we continue to do it now and show our support as one community, coming together for our very own who's been with us throughout these years?

Borja Funeral Home's planned expansion by adding a crematory is a welcome addition to our small community where we all so desire for something that will make our way of life a little easy.


Jose C. Sablan

Oleai, Saipan

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian


TODAY



Partly sunny with isolated showers.
Northeast winds 15 to 20 mph.

▲87° ▼78°


SATURDAY



Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.
East winds 10 to 20 mph.

▲87° ▼77°


SUNDAY



Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.
East winds 10 to 20 mph.

▲87° ▼78°


MONDAY



Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.
East winds 10 to 20 mph.

▲87° ▼78°

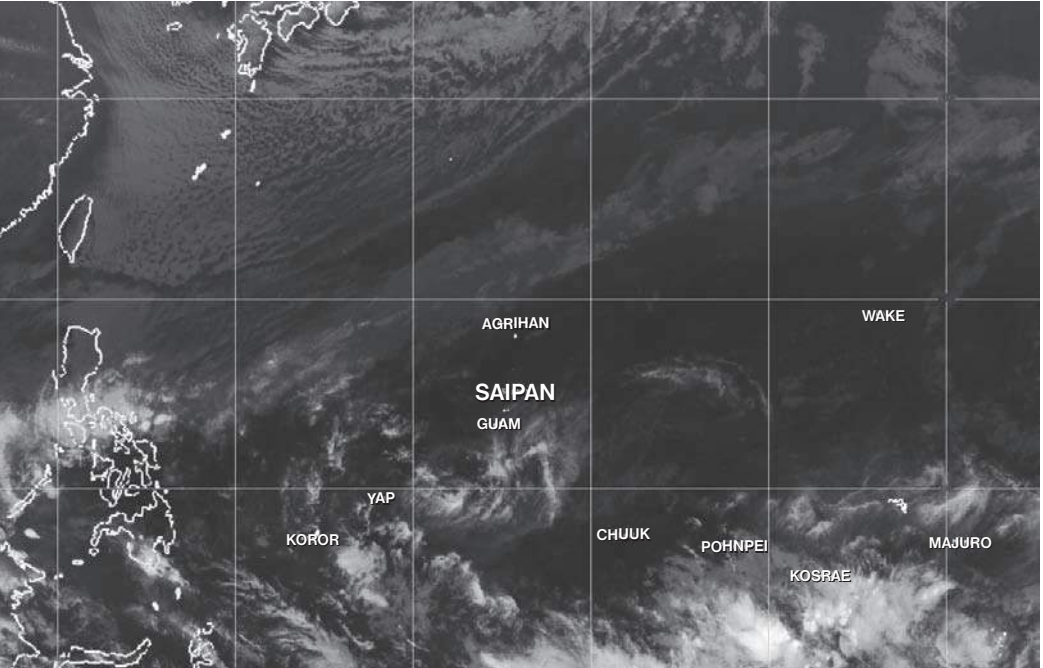
TUESDAY



Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.
East winds 10 to 20 mph.

▲87° ▼77°

Yesterday's Satellite Image




PICTURE TIME: 1:00PM, THURSDAY, JANUARY 1, 2015
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A cold front runs southwestward from 25N138E to 22N130E. Numerous showers are along and up to 50 miles northwest of this front. A nearly-stationary front extends westward from north of Wake Island at 25N165E to 24N154E then southwestward across the far Northern Mariana Islands to beyond 14N130E. Cloudiness and patchy showers are occurring along and up to 250 miles northwest of this boundary. A near-equatorial trough runs southeastward from 4N130E to end at EQ150E. Scattered showers and a few thunderstorms are south of Koror, Yap and Chuuk or south of a line from 2N134E to 7N139E to 1N152E. Trade-wind convergence is triggering scattered showers and a few thunderstorms in several areas from south of Pohnpei to near Kosrae and across Tarawa and Butaritari Atolls or south of a line from 5N156E to 6N165E to 4N180E.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

Micronesia			
Guam And Rota	Thundershowers	▲ 84	▼ 78
Palau	Thunderstorms	▲ 87	▼ 79
Yap	Thunderstorms	▲ 85	▼ 78
Chuuk	Mostly Cloudy	▲ 85	▼ 80
Pohnpei	Mostly Cloudy	▲ 87	▼ 79
Kosrae	Thunderstoms	▲ 85	▼ 80
Majuro	Thunderstoms	▲ 84	▼ 80

Around the Globe			
Auckland	Partly Cloudy	▲ 74	▼ 58
Beijing	Sunny	▲ 41	▼ 19
Hong Kong	Sunny	▲ 63	▼ 56
Honolulu	Partly Cloudy	▲ 76	▼ 64
London	Partly Cloudy	▲ 52	▼ 43
Los Angeles	Sunny	▲ 60	▼ 40
Manila	Partly Cloudy	▲ 81	▼ 71
Melbourne	Sunny	▲100	▼ 79
Miami	Partly Cloudy	▲ 79	▼ 71
New York	Sunny	▲ 40	▼ 33
Osaka	Partly Cloudy	▲ 41	▼ 31
Paris	Cloudy	▲ 52	▼ 37
Pusan	Partly Cloudy	▲ 42	▼ 23
Rome	Sunny	▲ 52	▼ 37
Salem	Sunny	▲ 41	▼ 28
San Francisco	Sunny	▲ 54	▼ 42
Seoul	Partly Cloudy	▲ 31	▼ 17
Tokyo	Partly Cloudy	▲ 45	▼ 32
Washington, DC	Mostly Sunny	▲ 45	▼ 33



NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any IT&E cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

Tides			
Saipan Harbor			
4:20 AM	Today	High Tide:	1.4 Feet
9:17 AM	Today	Low Tide:	1.0 Feet
3:16 PM	Today	High Tide:	2.0 Feet
10:46 PM	Today	Low Tide:	0.0 Feet

Sunrise/Sunset		
Today	6:43 AM	5:59 PM
Saturday	6:44 AM	6:00 PM
Sunday	6:44 AM	6:00 PM
Monday	6:44 AM	6:01 PM
Tuesday	6:45 AM	6:01 PM

Moonrise/Moonset		
Today	3:35 PM	3:47 AM
Thursday	4:25 PM	4:41 AM
Friday	5:17 PM	5:33 AM
Saturday	6:08 PM	6:23 AM
Sunday	6:58 PM	7:10 AM

NEWS DESK

For news tips, corrections and requests for news coverage, call (670) 235-NEWS (6397), 235-2440, fax 235,3740. E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com. Website:www.saipantribune.com.

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF NOVEMBER 12, 2014

DEPARTURES				ARRIVALS			
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)				GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN			
UA5070	4:15am	5:05am	Daily	UA5069	2:45am	3:35am	Daily
UA5068	8:00am	8:50am	3	UA5071	6:40am	7:30am	3
UA5068	8:40am	9:30am	1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7	UA5071	7:15am	8:05am	1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7
UA5039	2:20pm	4:00pm	6, 7 via Rota	UA5039	1:00pm	1:50pm	6, 7
UA5078	3:10pm	4:00pm	1, 5	UA5038	1:10pm	2:40pm	2, 4 via Rota
UA5038	3:10pm	4:00pm	2, 4	UA5077	1:50pm	2:40pm	1, 5
UA5040	6:55pm	7:45pm	1, 5	UA5041	5:35pm	6:25pm	1, 5
UA5078	8:35pm	9:25pm	2, 3, 4, 6, 7	UA5077	7:15pm	8:05pm	2, 3, 4, 6, 7
UA5044	10:40pm	11:30pm	1, 5	UA5043	9:20pm	10:10pm	1, 5
SAIPAN-ROTA (ROP)				GUAM (GUM)-ROTA (ROP)			
UA5039	2:20pm	2:55pm	6, 7	UA5038	1:10pm	1:45pm	2, 4
ROTA (ROP)-GUAM (GUM)				ROTA (ROP)-SAIPAN			
UA5039	3:25pm	4:00pm	6, 7	UA5038	2:05pm	2:40pm	2, 4
SAIPAN-PALAU (ROR)				PALAU (ROR)-SAIPAN			
DL287	6:05am	1:05am+1	2, 6 via NRT	DL298	4:30am	3:00pm	3, 7 via NRT
SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT)				NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN			
DL287	6:05am	8:40am	1, 2, 4, 5, 6	DL298	10:25am	3:00pm	Daily
DL297	4:20pm	7:05pm	Daily	DL288	8:55pm	1:25am+1	1, 3, 4, 5, 7
SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN)				SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN			
OZ606	2:10am	6:00am	1	OZ603	9:00am	2:20pm	Daily
OZ606	2:40am	6:30am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	7C 3402	10:10am	3:30pm	Daily
OZ604	3:20pm	7:10pm	Daily	OZ605	7:40pm	1:10am+1	7
7C 3401	4:30pm	8:20pm	Daily	OZ605	8:10pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)				BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN			
OZ608	3:10am	6:20am	4, 7	OZ607	9:00pm	1:50am+1	3, 6
SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG)				SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN			
3U8648	6:10am	8:40am	1, 4, 5, 7	3U8647	10:30pm	5:50am+1	3, 4, 6, 7
SAIPAN-BEIJING (PEK)				BEIJING (PEK)-SAIPAN			
MU764A	1:30am	5:30am	4, 7	MU763A	4:30pm	12:30am+1	3, 6
MU764	1:30am	5:30am	1, 5	MU763	4:30pm	12:30am+1	4, 7
SAIPAN-GUANGZHOU (CAN)				GUANGZHOU (CAN)-SAIPAN			
3U8646	4:30am	7:30am	2, 6	3U8645	7:55pm	3:10am+1	1, 5
SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN			
OZ606/701	2:10am	11:15am	1 via ICN	OZ704/603	12:10am	2:20pm	Daily via ICN
OZ606/701	2:40am	11:15am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN	PR110/UA5041	7:35am	6:25pm	1,5 via GUM
UA5069/PR111	2:45am	4:50pm	1, 3, 5, 6, 7 via GUM	PR110/UA5077	7:35am	8:05pm	3, 6, 7 via GUM
UA5070/191	4:15am	7:20am	2, 7 via GUM	PR110/UA5043	7:35am	10:10pm	1, 5 via GUM
UA5070/191	4:15am	9:00am	3, 6 via GUM	DL172/288	9:40am	1:25am+1	1, 3, 4, 5, 7 via NRT
UA5070/183	4:15am	8:45pm	2, 5 via GUM	UA190/5077	9:55am	8:05pm	2, 7 via GUM
UA5070/183	4:15am	9:10pm	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM	UA190/5077	10:00am	8:05pm	3, 6 via GUM
DL287/473	6:05am	9:50pm	1, 2, 4, 5, 6 via NRT	OZ702/605	12:30pm	1:10am+1	7 via ICN
UA5071/PR111	6:40am	4:50pm	3 via GUM	OZ702/605	12:30pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
UA5071/PR111	7:15am	4:50pm	1, 5, 6, 7 via GUM	UA184/5071	10:55pm	7:30am+1	3 via GUM
UA5068/183	8:00am	9:50pm	3 via GUM	UA184/5071	10:55pm	8:05am+1	1, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA5068/183	8:40am	9:30pm	2, 5 via GUM	UA184/5039	10:55pm	1:50pm+1	6, 7 via GUM
UA5068/183	8:40am	9:50pm	1, 4, 6, 7 via GUM	UA184/5038	10:55pm	2:40pm+1	4 via GUM-Rota
UA5039/183	2:20pm	9:50pm	6, 7 via Rota-GUM	UA184/5077	10:55pm	2:40pm+1	1 via GUM-Rota
UA5038/183	3:10pm	9:30pm	2 via GUM	UA184/5041	10:55pm	6:25pm+1	1 via GUM
UA5078/183	3:10pm	9:30pm	5 via GUM	UA184/5077	10:55pm	8:05pm+1	3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA5078/183	3:10pm	9:50pm	1 via GUM	UA184/5043	10:55pm	10:10pm+1	1 via GUM
UA5038/183	3:10pm	9:50pm	4 via GUM	UA184/5071	10:59pm	8:05am+1	2, 5 via GUM
OZ604/703	3:20pm	11:50pm	Daily via ICN	UA184/5038	10:59pm	2:40pm+1	2 via GUM-Rota
				UA184/5077	10:59pm	2:40pm+1	5 via GUM
				UA184/5041	10:59pm	6:25pm+1	5 via GUM
				UA184/5077	10:59pm	8:05pm+1	2 via GUM
				UA184/5043	10:59pm	10:10pm+1	5 via GUM
SAIPAN-HONG KONG (HKG)				HONG KONG (HKG)-SAIPAN			
OZ606/721	2:10am	11:50am	1 via ICN	OZ746/603	12:30am	2:20pm	Daily via ICN
OZ606/723	2:10am	12:50pm	1 via ICN	OZ750/603	1:10am	2:20pm	Daily via ICN
OZ606/721	2:40am	11:50am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN	OZ722/605	1:15pm	1:10am+1	7 via ICN
OZ606/723	2:40am	12:50pm	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN	OZ724/605	2:20pm	1:10am+1	7 via ICN
UA5070/179	4:15am	10:35pm	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM	OZ722/605	1:15pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
UA5068/179	8:00am	10:35pm	3 via GUM	OZ724/605	2:20pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
UA5068/179	8:40am	10:35pm	1, 5, 6 via GUM	UA180/5071	10:55pm	7:30am+1	3 via GUM
UA5039/179	2:20pm	10:35pm	6 via Rota-GUM	UA180/5071	10:55pm	8:05am+1	1, 5, 6 via GUM
UA5078/179	3:10pm	10:35pm	1, 5 via GUM	UA180/5039	10:55pm	1:50pm+1	6 via GUM
OZ604/749	3:20pm	10:30pm	Daily via ICN	UA180/5077	10:55pm	2:40pm+1	1, 5 via GUM-Rota
				UA180/5041	10:55pm	6:25pm+1	1, 5 via GUM
				UA180/5077	10:55pm	8:05pm+1	3, 6 via GUM
				UA180/5043	10:55pm	10:10pm+1	1, 5 via GUM

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); 3U: Sichuan Airlines; MU: China Eastern; UA: United Airlines; DL: Delta Airlines; OZ: Asiana; 7C: Jeju AirETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.					
TINIAN TO SAIPAN			SAIPAN TO TINIAN		
DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
7:00AM	7:15AM	Mon, Tue,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat	7:00AM	7:15AM	Daily
			8:00AM	8:15AM	Daily
7:30AM	7:45AM	Daily	9:00AM	9:15AM	Daily
8:30AM	8:45AM	Daily	10:00AM	10:15AM	Daily
9:30AM	9:45AM	Daily	11:00AM	11:15AM	Daily
10:30AM	10:45AM	Daily	12:00NN	12:15NN	Daily
11:30AM	11:45AM	Daily	1:00PM	1:15PM	Daily
12:30NN	12:45NN	Daily	2:00PM	2:15PM	Daily
1:30PM	1:45PM	Daily	3:00PM	3:15PM	Daily
2:30PM	2:45PM	Daily	4:00PM	4:15PM	Daily
3:30PM	3:45PM	Daily	5:00PM	5:15PM	Daily
4:30PM	4:45PM	Daily	6:00PM	6:15PM	Daily
5:30PM	5:45PM	Daily			
6:30PM	6:45PM	Daily			
SAIPAN TO ROTA			ROTA TO SAIPAN		
DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
7:45AM	8:15AM	Mon, Tues,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat	8:30AM	9:00AM	Mon, Tues,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat
4:00PM	4:30PM	Mon, Tues,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat	4:45PM	5:15PM	Mon, Tues,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat

NMC working with HI universities to become a sea grant institution

By **DENNIS B. CHAN**
dennis_chan@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A major step in helping the Northern Marianas College become a full-fledged sea grant institution entailed visiting colleges in Hawaii recently, according to college president Dr. Sharon Hart, who joined other college officials on a trip to the University of Hawaii and Hawaii Pacific University.

Both have colleges volunteered their assistance in helping NMC meet its goals, according to Hart.

The college visited UH and witnessed their formal evaluation as a sea grant institution, Hart said. She said the college was able to meet with key officials leading the formal review process of UH there.

"It was real learning lesson," she said, adding that UH has volunteered to review NMC's proposal in becoming a seed grant institution.

A project proposal is targeted

for submission in February, according to Hart. The college has been asked, she said, to work with the University of Guam, its closest regional partner, who is currently approved under "level three" to become a sea grant institution, according to Hart. There are "four levels" in becoming a full-fledged sea grant institution.

"We've already started talking with [UOG]. We will be getting together with them real soon to start our proposal."

Hart, who was accompanied by members of the college's Cooperative Research Extension and Education Service to Hawaii, told regents of some of Hawaii Pacific University's new projects.

"They are building dorms right on the edge of the waters there in Honolulu. It's going to be very interesting, what they are looking at for their international students," she said.

The college has been aiming to build a residence hall for

international and inter-island students.

Hart learned of a plan of the university to have a third of its students come from abroad, a third from Hawaii, and the other third from the U.S. mainland.

"They have a very interesting approach for what they look at for the types of students they want to bring to their institution," she said.

"They want to work closely with us...especially with our goal in becoming a sea grant institution," she added.

The National Sea Grant College Program is a program of the National Ocean and Atmospheric Administration. It is a national network of colleges and universities involved in scientific research, education, training, and extension projects geared toward the conservation and practical use of the coast, Great Lakes, and other marine areas.

CREES gets a new dean

The position of dean for the Northern Marianas College's Cooperative Research Extension and Educational Services has been filled, according to college president Dr. Sharon Hart at the Board of Regents meeting last week. The new dean will report to the college in the next few months, according to her.

Right now, CREES' acting dean is Patricia Coleman, after long-time dean Ross Manglona was sent packing in July this year when he was put on administrative leave and reportedly escorted off campus by security guards. His contract expired in August.

Hart described CREES' new dean as one with "extensive experience in research extension."

To her understanding, she said, the new dean is currently working at a university in Afghanistan.

"We are extremely fortunate, and excited," she told the Board of Regents.

CREES works with stakeholders in the community in such areas as agriculture, aquaculture, and food processing, among others. *(Dennis B. Chan)*



Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality
Division of Coastal Resources Management
P.O. Box 10007, Saipan, MP 96950
Tel.: (670) 664-8300 • Fax: (670) 664-8315
www.crm.gov.mp



NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

The Division of Coastal Resources Management (DCRM) will be holding a public hearing regarding Coastal Permit Application No. SMS-2014-X-054 submitted by the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation for the exploratory drilling of an existing CUC well (GR-6) for the purpose of collecting scientific data for evaluation and assessment regarding the potential for utilizing geothermal energy on Saipan. The project site is located in Gualo Rai, Saipan.

The public hearing is scheduled for Wednesday, January 14, 2015, 6:00 PM at the Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality office (2nd floor conference room) located in the GRC Building in Gualo Rai, Saipan.

The public is invited to attend and make oral comments regarding this project. The project file is open for review and comments during business hours from 7:30 A.M. – 4:30 P.M. Written comments can be submitted to the DCRM Office located in the GRC Bldg. in Gualo Rai, Saipan, or mail to the Division of Coastal Resources Management, Caller Box 10007 or fax at 664-8315. All written and oral comments received will be made a part of the permit application record, and will be considered in any decision made concerning the proposed project.

Please contact the Division of Coastal Resources Management at 664-8300/1 if you have any questions or require further information regarding this project.

/s/Frances A. Castro

Director

Division of Coastal Resources Management



Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
Office of the Executive Director



INVITATION FOR BIDS CUC-IFB-15-004

SECURITY GUARD SERVICES

The Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC), Office of the Executive Director is soliciting competitive sealed bids from qualified firms to provide Security Guard Services for various posts at CUC, Saipan, Tinian and Rota, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The Bid Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check, wire transfer or credit card in the amount of \$100.00 for one package set. Prospective Bidders must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division by December 29, 2014 to be considered.

A Pre-Bid Conference followed by a site visitation of CUC Saipan Facilities will be held on **December 30, 2014** at 10:00 a.m. (ChST) at the CUC Main Conference Room, 3rd Floor, Room No. 17, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building. A site visitation of CUC Rota Facilities will be conducted on January 2, 2015 at 10:00 a.m. (ChST). A site visitation of CUC Tinian Facilities will be conducted on January 5, 2015 at 10:00 a.m. (ChST).

Contractors must provide proof of "Indemnity Liability Insurance," specifically covering security workers assigned to CUC's compound. Coverage must be a minimum of \$200,000.00. The Contractor shall agree to and indemnify and hold CUC harmless from and against all liability, loss, damage or injury, and all cost and expenses (including attorneys' fees and costs of any suit related thereto) suffered or incurred by the Cooperative, arising from or related to Contractor's negligent performance under the contract.

Bidders shall provide a certification signed by a principal of the company stating that the company is currently in full compliance with all applicable CNMI and Federal Labor Laws and has been for the past Five (5) years. Bidders shall submit a listing of all of its employees (US & Foreign) with corresponding job titles and a certification of good standing from the CNMI Department of Labor. Failure of the company to provide the certification is grounds to reject the entire bid.

One (1) original and Five (5) hard copies must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked "CUC-IFB-15-004, Security Guard Services", to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, **no later than 10:00 AM (ChST, Saipan Time) on January 15, 2015** at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered.

A Bid Guarantee of fifteen (15%) percent of the total bid price must accompany the bids. The security deposit may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. A *Payment Bond* of one hundred (100%) percent and a *Performance Bond* of one hundred (100%) percent of the total bid price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidders. The Payment and Performance bond must be executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification shall be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). Bidders are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.

This Invitation for Bids does not commit CUC to the award of a contract or contracts, nor to pay any cost incurred in the preparation and submission of bid in anticipation of a contract. This request and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations. The contractor shall be required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. All responses to this Invitation for Bids should take into account any and all taxes, including excise tax, which will become the obligation of the bidder, awarded a contract.

All bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid under the contract.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from pre-registered prospective bidders and must be submitted in writing no later than 10:00 a.m. (ChST) on **December 31, 2014** to Manny B. Sablan, Purchasing Officer, CUC Procurement & Supply Division via email address manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Vincent Pangelinan, Safety Officer, CUC Compliance & Safety Division via email address vince.pangelinan@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids for any reason and to waive any defects in said bid, if in its sole opinion, to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

ALAN W. FLETCHER
Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Officer



Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
Office of the Executive Director



INVITATION FOR BIDS CUC-IFB-15-009

A-16 LIFT STATION REHABILITATION PROJECT

The Office of the Executive Director for the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids from qualified firms for the rehabilitation and upgrade of A-16 Sewer Lift Station in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. The project consists, in general, of the rehabilitation and upgrade of A-16 Sewer Lift Station. The work shall be done not to disrupt the daily operation of the sewer discharge. The work includes rehabilitation of the wet well, remove existing pumps and appurtenances and install new pumps, guide rails, control panel, valves, replacement of pipes and fittings, temporary wastewater bypass system, installation of new fence and gate, and other related work. CUC requires the Project to be completed in **270 calendar days** from date of award of contract.

The Project is funded by a grant from the United States of Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). The award of this project is contingent upon receipt of approval for project award from USEPA.

Prospective Bidders for this IFB must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The IFB package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check, wire transfer or credit card in the amount of \$200.00 for one IFB package set.

A Pre-Bid Conference followed by site visits will be held on **January 13, 2015 at 10:00 AM (ChST)** at the CUC Main Conference Room, 3rd Floor, Room No.10, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building.

One (1) original and Five (5) copies of the bid MUST be submitted in a sealed envelope marked "CUC-IFB-15-009, A-16 Lift Station Rehabilitation Project", to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, **no later than 10:00 AM (ChST) on January 29, 2015**, at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Bids mailed via postal or courier service must be received on or before due date and time or post-marked before due date and time. Bid shall be submitted on the provided Bid Forms. Bidders are required to complete all Bid Forms. Bidders may supplement this form as appropriate. Bids will be required to be submitted under a condition of irrevocability for a period of 60 days after submission. **Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered.**

A Bid Guarantee of fifteen (15%) percent of the total bid price must accompany the bids. The security deposit may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. A *Payment Bond* of one hundred (100%) percent and a *Performance Bond* of one hundred (100%) percent of the total bid price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidders. The Payment and Performance bond must be executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, for the protection of all persons supplying labor and material to the contractor or its subcontractors for the performance of the work provided for in the contract.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification shall be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). **Bidders are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.**

Bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid under the contract. Bidders are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations.

This Invitation for Bids does not commit CUC to the award of a contract or contracts, nor to pay any cost incurred in the preparation and submission of bid in anticipation of a contract. The award of a contract may be contingent upon the Commonwealth Public Utilities Commission's (CPUC) approval. If CPUC approval is required, the contract will not be executed by CUC until such approval is provided. This bid and ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations. The contractor shall be required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from pre-registered bidders and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on January 15, 2015** to Mr. Manny B. Sablan, Jr., CUC Purchasing Officer, via email address manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Ms. Birhen Martinez, Water/Wastewater Engineer via email address birhen.martinez@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids for any reason and to waive any defects in said bid proposal, if in its sole opinion, to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

ALAN W. FLETCHER
Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Officer

Fee waivers for January 8 NMC Info Session participants

Individuals who participate in the Northern Marianas College's upcoming Information Session will qualify to receive fee waivers for the NMC admission application and placement tests for the upcoming spring 2015 semester, a savings of about \$75.

The information session, which is open to all prospective students and community members, will be on Thursday, Jan. 8, 2015, from 5pm to 6pm in Room D-1 at the college's As Terlaje campus. The topics include the college's new Bachelor's Degree in Business Management, the College, Prior Learning Assessment program, and other new initiatives.

College faculty, staff, and students from the different degree and certificate programs at NMC, as well as Student Services representatives from counseling, financial aid, and admissions will also be on hand to provide helpful information and answer questions.

The Northern Marianas College offers several degree and certificate programs, including a bachelor of science degree in education (emphasis on elementary education, early childhood education, special education, or rehabilitation and human services), bachelor of science degree in business management (new); associate degrees business administration (emphasis on accounting, business management, or computer applications), liberal arts, nursing, natural resources management, criminal justice, and hospitality management. Moreover, it offers short-term certificate programs in different vocational, academic, and professional areas.

For more information about the information session and/or applying to NMC, contact the Office of Admissions & Records at (670) 237-6770, email oar@marianas.edu or visit www.marianas.edu. (NMC)



A TREAT FOR THE MAN'AMKO

IT&E celebrated Christmas by giving back to the *man'amko* community with free manicures, pedicures and hair spa. In this photo: The *man'amko* pose with Natashaia Tmokane, IT&E marketing coordinator (left); Veronica Acosta, IT&E product manager; Hans W. Mickelson, IT&E sales & marketing manager; Rose Soledad, IT&E managing director & comptroller (center).

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



Rose Soledad, IT&E managing director & comptroller, (center) says, "IT&E always finds ideas to celebrate this special time of the year by giving back to our senior citizens who have been instrumental in the success of our company."

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Notice of Zoning Board Meeting

The regular meeting of the Zoning Board will be held on Thursday, January 8, 2015 at 5:00 PM, Multi Purpose Center, Susupe, Saipan (Tel: 234-9661 • Fax: 234-9666 • e-mail: www.zoning.gov.mp)

A. Preliminary Matters

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Adoption of Agenda
4. Adoption of December 04, 2014 minutes
5. Public Comments (not related to files for discussion under item B. Public Hearings)

B. Public Hearings.

1. Conditional Use Application #2014-3520: Carmen Safeway Enterprises Inc. dba Borja Funeral Home is proposing to operate a funeral home with crematory services on lots 006 H 11 and 006 H 30. This use is classified as "Funeral Homes" and is permitted in this district as a Conditional Use. This area is located along Beach Road, Susupe, north of Bank of Saipan, and east of Aquarius Beach Tower. It is zoned as Village Commercial.
2. Conditional Use Application #2014-2506: Saipan Adventure Tours, LLC is proposing to operate a zip-line amusement activity designed to enable users propelled by gravity to travel from the top to bottom of inclined cables. This use is classified as Amusement, Outdoor and will be located on lots 064 A 02, 074 A 01, 084 A 01, and 085 A 01 in Marpi. These areas are zoned as Rural, Public Resource, and Tourist Resort.

C. Communications/ Reports

D. Old Business.

1. None

E. New Business

1. Office Operations Report (Permit and Enforcement)
2. Notice of Intent and Public Meeting (Community Facilities Projects): The Commonwealth Zoning Board has filed an application with the USDA Rural Development for financial assistance to purchase a vehicle for the Zoning Office. A public meeting for comments will be held at 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, January 8, 2015 at the Gov. Pedro P. Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center in Susupe, Saipan.

F. Executive (Closed) Session.

G. Miscellaneous: Other Matters, Announcements, Next Meeting, Adjourn.

For questions or access to materials to be considered at the Board meeting, or if you require assistance, please contact the Zoning Administrator, Therese T. Ogomoro, at 234-9661. This notice is provided pursuant to Public Law 6-32, as amended (2 CMC 7201, et seq. & 10 CMC 3511, et seq.).

/s/ Diego C. Blanco, Zoning Board Chairman

NOTICE OF ZONING BOARD PUBLIC HEARING

for

Carmen Safeway Enterprises Inc. dba Borja Funeral Home

The public is invited to attend and provide comments at a Zoning Board public hearing on this request for Conditional Use Permit. Carmen Safeway Enterprises Inc. dba Borja Funeral Home is proposing to operate a funeral home with crematory services on lots 006 H 11 and 006 H 30. This use is classified as "Funeral Homes" and is permitted in this district as a Conditional Use. This area is located along Beach Road, Susupe, north of Bank of Saipan, and east of Aquarius Beach Tower. It is zoned as Village Commercial.

Date: January 8th, 2015, Thursday

Time: 5:00 pm

Place: Multi Purpose Center, Susupe, Saipan

The above application may be viewed at the Zoning Office, 2nd Floor, Joeten Dandan Building, Saipan. Comments on the project may be submitted orally or in writing at the public hearing. Written comments shall be submitted in writing to the Zoning Office, 2nd floor, Joeten Building, Dandan, Saipan no later than 4:30pm, January 7th, 2015. Written comments may also be submitted via email to therese.ogumoro@zoning.gov.mp, via US mail to Caller Box 10007, Saipan, MP 96950 no later than January 7th, 2015.

For questions or access to materials to be considered at the public hearing, or if you require assistance, please call 234-9661. This notice is provided pursuant to Public Law 6-32, as amended (2 CMC 7201, et seq. & Saipan Zoning Law of 2013).

/s/ Diego C. Blanco, Board Chairman

NOTICE OF ZONING BOARD PUBLIC HEARING

for

Saipan Adventure Tours, LLC

The public is invited to attend and provide comments at a Zoning Board public hearing on this request for Conditional Use Permit. Saipan Adventure Tours, LLC is proposing to operate a zip-line amusement activity designed to enable users propelled by gravity to travel from the top to bottom of inclined cables. This use is classified as Amusement, Outdoor and will be located on lots 064 A 02, 074 A 01, 084 A 01, and 085 A 01 in Marpi. These areas are zoned as Rural, Public Resource, and Tourist Resort.

Date: January 8th, 2015, Thursday

Time: 5:00 pm

Place: Multi Purpose Center, Susupe, Saipan

The above application may be viewed at the Zoning Office, 2nd Floor, Joeten Dandan Building, Saipan. Comments on the project may be submitted orally or in writing at the public hearing. Written comments shall be submitted in writing to the Zoning Office, 2nd floor, Joeten Building, Dandan, Saipan no later than 4:30pm, January 7th, 2015. Written comments may also be submitted via email to therese.ogumoro@zoning.gov.mp, via US mail to Caller Box 10007, Saipan, MP 96950 no later than January 7th, 2015.

For questions or access to materials to be considered at the public hearing, or if you require assistance, please call 234-9661. This notice is provided pursuant to Public Law 6-32, as amended (2 CMC 7201, et seq. & Saipan Zoning Law of 2013).

/s/ Diego C. Blanco, Board Chairman

JANUARY IS CERVICAL CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

Women urged to avail of early screening for cervical cancer

By JAYSON CAMACHO

jayson_camacho@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Joined by members of the Commonwealth Cancer Association, the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. Division of Public Health's Non-Communicable Disease Bureau and supporters, Lt. Gov. Jude U. Hofschneider has proclaimed January as Cervical Cancer Awareness Month.

The proclamation signing, held Tuesday at the Governor's Office, says the human papillomavirus is responsible for up to 70 percent of cervical cancers and that HPV vaccine prevents early stage cervical cancer.

It adds "There are too many women in the CNMI that have passed away from cervical cancer. These were preventable deaths, and where cervical cancer can often be cured when it is found early, it is usually found through an early stage to a yet early or simple test called a pap smear. Pap smears are effective but it must be done regularly."

A pap smear, also called a pap test, is a procedure to test for cervical cancer in women.

The proclamation also says that "January 2015 is National Cervical Cancer Awareness Month. CCA recognizes the impact of cervical cancer in our community. CHCC's NCD Bureau will help provide women with HPV vaccine."

CCA board treasurer Maggie C. Camacho said they are trying to reach out to the public and try to reach more people to get screened and the earlier they are screened is a lot better.

"We are trying to reach out to the general population of women. Espe-



JAYSON CAMACHO

January welcomes the first proclaimed month of the year, Cervical Cancer Awareness Month. Lt. Gov. Jude U. Hofschneider, who is joined here by the Commonwealth Cancer Association, supporters, and the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. Division of Public Health Non-Communicable Disease Bureau on Tuesday, Dec. 30, for the proclamation signing, urged all women in the CNMI to get themselves checked.

cially nowadays, the younger generation is active in sex and you never know and that is why we try to promote HPV vaccinations in schools and will help prevent cervical cancer," Camacho said.

CCA program manager Juan L. Babauta said that CCA members will try to reach out to schools as well and get

the parents involved.

"There are no symptoms of cervical cancer and it is only around where the cancer develops that women might experience some discomfort. Cervical cancer generally develops slowly and in many cases can be prevented through screening and treatment of precancerous conditions," Babauta said.

Hofschneider echoed CCA members in calling for all women to get educated about screening services.

"I urge all women in the CNMI to educate themselves and do early preventive screening with their healthcare providers and become aware that they are at risk of getting cervical cancer and ask all citizens who have women in

their lives to do the same," Hofschneider said.

This January, the theme color for Cervical Cancer Awareness Month is teal and white.

For more information and screening, call CCA at 682-0050 or visit them on Middle Road, Gualo Rai next to the 670 shop and NMPASI office.



Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION

Tel. (670) 234-6866/234-9447/234-7689/234-7670 - Fax. (670) 234-9021
Email: nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp



NOTICE OF FUNDING AVAILABILITY OF COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT FUNDS FOR PROGRAM YEAR 2015

THIS ADVERTISEMENT IS PAID FOR BY NMHC WITH CPD FUNDS.

The Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, through the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) is announcing the availability of an **estimated \$1,240,460.00** in Community Planning and Development (CPD) funds available from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. NMHC anticipates receiving an estimated amount of \$868,915.00 in Community Development Block Grants (CDBG); \$309,294.00 in Home Investment Partnerships (HOME); and, \$62,251.00 in Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) funds for Program Year (PY) 2015.

The CDBG funds, authorized under Title I of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, may be used for a wide range of community development activities to revitalize neighborhoods, provide affordable housing, expand economic opportunities, and improve community facilities and services. However, use of these funds must meet at least one of the national objectives which include: 1) to benefit low and moderate-income families; 2) to eliminate slum or blight conditions; or 3) to meet other urgent community development needs.

The CDBG program requires a grant recipient to certify that it will minimize displacement of persons as a result of activities assisted with CDBG funds. The CNMI government does not plan on undertaking any activity which will cause displacement of person. In the event of any unforeseen displacement resulting from any CDBG funded activity, the CNMI government will comply with the requirements of the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, its implementing regulation and applicable local law.

HOME funds may be used to create affordable housing through financing assistance, site acquisition or improvement, and rehabilitating existing residential dwellings as well as providing funds for new construction or purchase of a single family residential dwelling. Use of HOME funds must benefit low-income families.

ESG funds may be used to rehabilitate or convert to buildings into homeless shelters and for shelter operating expenses, supportive services and homeless prevention and rapid re-housing activities. Use of ESG funds must benefit the homeless.

Applications for the use of CPD funds are available for pick up at the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) located in Garapan, Saipan; San Jose Village, Tinian; and, Songsong Village, Rota, beginning January 06, 2015.

Applications must be submitted to the NMHC Offices in Garapan, Saipan (Saipan Residents); San Jose, Tinian (Tinian Residents); and, Songsong Village, Rota (Rota Residents) by **Friday, March 23, 2015, no later than 4:30 p.m.** Applications submitted after **March 23, 2015, will not be accepted.**

A briefing will be conducted for interested applicants and for those applicants who have picked up an application for the use of CPD funds. The briefing will address the program requirements and regulations concerning the usage of CPD funds.

The schedules for briefing are as follows: February 18, 2015, 5:00 p.m. & February 25, 2015, 5:00 p.m.

We are encouraging all non-profit, for profit, and government service providers who are providing services to people with disabilities, homeless individuals, and emergency shelter administrators and operators to attend this briefing.

For residents living on the island of Saipan, the briefing will be held at the NMHC Office in Garapan; Residents living on the island of Tinian, the briefing will be held at the NMHC Office in San Jose Village; and Residents living on the island of Rota, the briefing will be held at the NMHC Office in Songsong Village.

Accommodations for disabled individuals or other non-English speaking individuals who wish to attend the briefing are available upon request by giving at least 24 hours notice prior to the meeting so that such needs can be arranged and provided. Additional inquiries, concerning the CPD program, may be directed to Ms. Zenie P. Mafnas, Deputy Corporate Director or Mr. Jacob Muna, Planning Assistant at 234-6866 or 234-7689.

/s/ Jesse S. Palacios
Corporate Director



Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION

Tel. (670) 234-6866/234-9447/234-7689/234-7670 - Fax. (670) 234-9021
Email: nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp



NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

This ad is paid for by NMHC funds.

Notice is hereby given that the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) is the agency authorized to allocate Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) in the CNMI. The United States 1986 Tax Reform Act created the federal low-income housing tax credit program under Section 42 of the Internal Revenue Code (Code) to assist with the development of low-income rental housing by providing qualified owners with credit to offset their federal tax obligations. The LIHTC is available to owners/developers of qualifying buildings and projects that meet certain low-income occupancy and rent restrictions.

Section 42 of the Code provides that the CNMI prepare a Qualified Allocation Plan (QAP) to determine housing priorities and to give preference to projects serving the lowest income tenants and projects obligated to serve qualified tenants for the longest periods. The QAP must incorporate selection criteria, which includes project location, housing need characteristics, sponsor characteristics, tenant populations with special needs, and public housing waiting lists. NMHC has made amendments to the previous QAP's selection criteria and fees.

NMHC will conduct a public hearing to solicit comments from the public on **February 02, 2015, 10:00 a.m.** at NMHC's Office in Garapan, Saipan. Copies of the draft **2015 and 2016** Qualified Allocation Plan (QAP) are also available at NMHC's Office in Garapan, Saipan and on our website at www.nmhc.gov.mp.

Interested persons wishing to express their views on the QAP may do so either by attending the public hearing or by submitting comments to NMHC by 4:30 p.m. on February 2, 2015.

For more information on this program, please contact NMHC at 234-6866/7670/7689/9447.

/s/ **JESSE S. PALACIOS**
Corporate Director

NMHC will make necessary arrangements for persons with disabilities or persons requiring interpreters upon prior notification. Should you require such arrangement, please contact Ms. Jocelyn Seman at telephone numbers 234-6866/7670/7689/9447.

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Business

Bull market for stocks keeps on going in 2014

By STEVE ROTHWELL
AP MARKETS WRITER

Stocks delivered again in 2014.

Even after a poor start in January and wobbles in October and December, the U.S. market climbed 11.4 percent and ended the year close to record levels. The solid gain pushed the bull run for stocks into its sixth year, the longest such streak since the 1990s.

Investors have been encouraged by rising corporate earnings and a strengthening U.S. economy, which helped stocks overcome a brief winter chill in growth and tensions with Russia. The stock market also overcame worries about the impact of the end of the Federal Reserve's stimulus program.

Those who stuck out the market's ups and downs were rewarded with double-digit returns for the fifth year out of the last six.

"Companies delivered and

the ability to produce on the bottom line remained resilient," said Jeff Kleintop, Charles Schwab's chief global investment strategist. "Ultimately, that's what stocks track."

All the major stock averages are ending the year with respectable returns. The Standard & Poor's 500 index has returned 13.7 percent including dividends, after a return of 32 percent in 2013.

The stock market also experienced its biggest bout of volatility in more than two years. Stocks plunged as much as 9.8 percent in October on concerns about global growth and worries about the spread of the Ebola virus.

The market also managed to climb despite a big drop in oil prices that hit energy companies. Geopolitical tensions flared as Russia seized Crimea, war broke out in eastern Ukraine and the Islamic State group seized swaths of territory in Iraq and Syria.



These were some of the biggest themes in the financial markets in 2014:

A RESILIENT ECONOMY

The backdrop for the stock

market's gains was a gradually strengthening U.S. economy. Hiring and consumer confidence continued to improve.

Despite a big contraction in the first quarter caused by an unusually harsh winter, the economy kept growing. The average pace of growth climbed to 2.7 percent by the end of the year, up from 2.3 percent a year earlier.

DON'T COUNT OUT BONDS

A widely forecast demise for bonds failed to materialize.

Bonds had been expected to slump as the Fed neared the end of its bond-buying stimulus program and economic growth accelerated. Instead, they rallied as investors became more pessimistic on the outlook for global growth as economies overseas weakened.

Bonds also gained because they looked attractive to overseas investors. Their yields, while close to historically low levels, are still higher than in countries like Germany and Japan.

The yield on the 10-year Treasury note ended the year at 2.17 percent, after starting 2014 at 3 percent. The Barclays Aggregate Index, which measures the performance of a broad range of bonds, returned 5.9 percent, its best year in three.

STILL LOOKING FOR INCOME

The biggest beneficiaries of lower bond yields were companies that pay rich dividends as investors looked to them as an alternative source of income.

"Investors still want bond-like returns," said Krishna Memani, chief investment officer of OppenheimerFunds. So "the more bond-like parts

of the equity market have done quite well."

Those sectors included utilities and real estate investment trusts. The utilities sector is the year with a gain of 24 percent, the best performance of the 10 sectors that make up the S&P 500 index.

Utility companies in the index have an average dividend yield of 3.4 percent. U.S. REITs pay about 3.6 percent.

DEAL REVIVAL

It was also a good year for deal-making. The value of global mergers and acquisitions rose to the highest point since 2007, while the number of initial public offerings was the highest since the technology bubble days of 2000.

Among the notable tie-ups announced were Actavis' agreement to buy fellow drug-maker Allergan for \$66 billion in November, and Comcast's deal to buy Time Warner Cable for \$45.2 billion in February.

In IPOs, China's e-commerce giant Alibaba raised \$25 billion in its stock market debut in September, making it the biggest U.S.-listed IPO in history. Strong demand for the stock sent the market value of the company beyond that of Amazon, eBay and Facebook.

KEEP THE GROWTH COMING

U.S. companies, benefiting from low interest rates and a gradually improving economy, have become adept at driving their profits higher since the recession. Those rising earnings are underpinning the rally in stocks.

Earnings at S&P 500 companies are projected to reach a record of \$116.97 per share for 2014, an increase of almost 8 percent from a year earlier, according to S&P Capital IQ. "If you look at the cash flow

In this July 3, 2014 file photo, specialist Jay Woods is reflected in a screen at his post that shows five years of the Dow Jones industrial average, on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange. The Dow Jones industrial average jumped above 17,000 for the first time that day. The Standard & Poor's 500 index climbed about 13 percent in 2014, hitting a record high a remarkable 51 times.

and profitability of companies today, especially in the U.S., it is just darn impressive," said Seth Masters, chief investment officer for Bernstein Global Wealth Management.

CHEAP OIL ISN'T ALL GOOD NEWS

Fears of weak growth overseas and worries of a supply glut combined to push oil down 50 percent in six months. After trading at a peak of \$107 a barrel in June, oil ended the year at \$53.27.

Falling oil prices lead to lower gas prices, which is a good thing for consumers. But there are also losers when crude slumps. Energy stocks, which account for about 10 percent of company earnings in the S&P 500 index, plunged.

As the losses in oil accelerated this fall, investors also worried about the wider implications. If prices stay low, some producers could go out of business, costing workers their jobs and prompting defaults in the bond market.

The fall in oil also created the year's biggest winners and losers.

Transocean, a provider of offshore drilling services to the energy industry, was the year's biggest loser among S&P 500 stocks as demand for its services was expected to fall. The stock price slumped 63 percent. Airlines, which are heavy users of fuel, were big beneficiaries of the slump. Southwest Airlines' stock has climbed 125 percent, the biggest gain in the S&P 500.

CENTRAL BANKS GO IN OPPOSITE DIRECTIONS

The Fed ended its bond purchases in October and is inching closer to its first rate increase since 2006. At the same time, other central banks around the world started to introduce more stimulus as growth in their regions slowed.

The Bank of Japan stepped up its efforts to revive that country's economy, as did the European Central Bank. China also lowered a key interest rate.

Investors debated whether the U.S. will pull the rest of the world up, or be dragged down by it.

New year may bring more small business help from Washington

NEW YORK (AP) -- Small business owners may get more help from Washington in 2015.

Gridlock in Washington in recent years has stalled tax bills and other legislation aimed at helping small companies, but such proposals are expected to be on the agenda in the Republican-led Congress. Democrats have opposed some proposals because of concerns about the impact of those tax breaks on the federal budget.

Parts of the health care law are likely to be debated. And lawmakers and the Small Business Administration hope to make it easier for companies to borrow.

"Small businesses are looking for government to function and get a lot more done," says John Arensmeyer, CEO of the advocacy group Small Business Majority.

But bills friendly to small businesses may not be a slam-dunk. Senate Democrats will have enough votes to filibuster and block GOP-sponsored legislation, and President Barack Obama can veto bills.

TAX HELP SOUGHT

Obama and Republicans support a reduction in the corporate tax rate from the current 35 percent.

But small businesses might not benefit from that, because many company owners are sole proprietors, partners or shareholders in companies who report business income on personal returns.

It's not known how many people fall into those categories, as the IRS doesn't keep statistics on the number of 1040 personal returns filed by business owners. But their numbers are large enough that small business advocates want a cut in personal tax rates as well.

A corporate rate reduction might be accompanied by the elimination of some business deductions, leaving many one-person companies and partnerships at a further disadvantage, says Todd McCracken, president of the advocacy group National Small Business Association.

Small business tax deductions are also likely to be taken up by legislators. The GOP is expected to try to make permanent an upfront deduction for the cost of equipment like computers and machinery. That means a quicker tax break for small businesses than if they depreciate equipment over the course of three to 20 years. The deduction has fluctuated annually, and an increase in the 2014 deduction to \$500,000 from \$25,000 wasn't approved until Dec. 16.

Another break that might become permanent is bonus depreciation, which accelerates the amount any business can deduct for property including buildings and equipment.

LENDING HELP

Congress is also expected to consider legislation to make

it easier for small businesses to borrow. Democrats on the Senate Committee on Small Business & Entrepreneurship expect to reintroduce a bill to help women-owned businesses get small- and intermediate-sized loans backed by the SBA.

A similar bill was introduced in late July but made little progress.

Separately, the SBA plans to launch an online system during the second quarter that simplifies the lending process. It's expected to encourage more banks, particularly smaller ones, to make SBA-backed loans, says SBA Administrator Maria Contreras-Sweet.

"It's streamlined in terms of there's no paper," Contreras-Sweet says.

The owners of Xero Shoes hope for an easier time getting an SBA loan in the new year. The application and approval process they went through for a \$500,000 loan in 2014 took eight months, longer than the two months their lender initially forecast.

Their financial records were in order, but they had to produce documentation to prove Xero was a small business and conformed to other requirements for the loan.

"I was unprepared for how much paperwork would be involved and how time-consuming it would be," says Lena Phoenix, chief operations officer of the Boulder, Colorado, shoe manufacturer.

Nation

Boy in shooting ‘unzipped’ special purse gun pocket

SPOKANE, Wash. (AP) -- Concealed weapons are part of everyday life in Idaho, and that’s unlikely to change in the Mountain West state despite a shocking accident in which a 2-year-old boy reached into his mother’s purse, got ahold of her gun and shot her in the head inside a Wal-Mart.

Veronica J. Rutledge, 29, was shopping Tuesday morning with her son and three nieces in Hayden, Idaho, when the small-caliber handgun discharged one time, killing her.

Terry Rutledge, Veronica’s father-in-law, told The Spokesman-Review that the boy unzipped the special gun compartment in the woman’s purse where the weapon was kept while she was looking at clothing.

Terry Rutledge said his daughter-in-law did not put the weapon “loosely into her purse.”

Victoria Rutledge had a concealed weapons permit, and guns were a big part of

Rutledge’s life, her father-in-law said.

“She was not the least bit irresponsible,” Terry Rutledge said in a brief interview with The Associated Press. He complained about people using the incident to attack his daughter-in-law.

Meanwhile, the Kootenai County Sheriff’s Office on Wednesday afternoon released a few more details about the incident. The boy removed the 9mm semi-automatic handgun from his mother’s purse and shot her once in the head, killing her instantly, the sheriff’s office said.

The manager of the store, who was nearby when the shot was fired, stepped in and took the firearm from the child, the sheriff’s office said. The manager and other employees secured the scene and evacuated customers.

The woman’s purse was new and was designed to carry a concealed firearm, the sheriff’s

office said. Detectives continue to analyze video from the store, examine the weapon and interview witnesses, the sheriff’s office added.

Terry Rutledge told The Washington Post that Veronica Rutledge and her husband practiced at shooting ranges and each had a concealed weapons permit. He said for Christmas this year, her husband gave her the purse with a special zippered pocket for a concealed weapon.

About 7 percent of adults in Idaho had concealed weapons permits at the end of 2012, according to the Crime Prevention Research Center in Swarthmore, Pennsylvania. That ranked Idaho among the top third of states.

Kootenai County, which has about 140,000 residents, has issued close to 16,000 concealed

weapons permits, Kootenai County sheriff’s spokesman Stu Miller said Wednesday.

“It’s very commonplace in northern Idaho for folks to have a concealed weapons permit,” Miller said, and most businesses do not prohibit firearms.

Veronica Rutledge lived in Blackfoot, in southeastern Idaho, and her family had come to the Hayden area to visit relatives for Christmas.

She was an employee of the Idaho National Laboratory near Idaho Falls, Idaho, where she was a nuclear scientist. The laboratory supports the U.S. Department of Energy in nuclear and energy research and national defense.

“We’re deeply saddened by this tragedy,” said Nicole Stricker, a spokeswoman for the lab.

Rutledge graduated from high school in Harrison, a lake-side town in the Idaho Panhandle. She was the valedictorian of her class. She graduated from the University of Idaho with a degree in chemistry.

She had taken the children to Wal-Mart on Tuesday morning to spend their Christmas gift cards, family members said. Her young son, her only child, was in a shopping cart.

Responding deputies found Rutledge dead in the electronics section of the Wal-Mart in Hayden, a rural town of about 12,000 people 40 miles north-east of Spokane.

Colt Rutledge, 32, arrived at the store in Idaho’s northern panhandle shortly after the shooting around 10:20 a.m. Tuesday, Miller said. All the

children were taken to a relative’s house.

Officers viewed surveillance video provided by the store to determine what happened, Miller said.

Like other Western states, gun rights are a big issue in Idaho. State lawmakers passed legislation earlier this year allowing concealed weapons on the state’s public college and university campuses. Despite facing opposition from all eight of the state’s university college presidents, lawmakers sided with gun-rights advocates who said the law would better uphold the Second Amendment.

Terry Rutledge told the AP that his daughter-in-law “was a beautiful, young, loving mother.”

“She was taken much too soon,” he said.

ACROSS THE NATION

Missing 14-month-old’s body found in creek

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP) —The body of a missing 14-month-old Maryland boy was found in an Ohio creek Wednesday after his mother allegedly lied to police that she had left him on a stranger’s porch. Officers mounted on horseback found the body of Cameron Beckford in a bag in Big Walnut Creek on Wednesday morning, said Sgt. Rich Weiner, a Columbus police spokesman. Dainesha Stevens has not been charged in the boy’s death but on Wednesday she was ordered held on \$150,000 bond on related charges of endangering children and tampering with evidence. Her attorney, Mark Collins, said she made up the story about having left the boy on a doorstep and that she tipped police to the creek where his body was found. Police began to investigate after Stevens, 24, called 911 on Monday to say a family wouldn’t return her 6-year-old daughter after she had agreed to let her go to their house to play with the kids.

Last 4 on Md. death row to have sentences commuted

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (AP) -- In one of his final acts as governor, Democrat Martin O’Malley announced Wednesday that he will commute the sentences of four death-row inmates to life in prison without parole. Two years ago, the General Assembly abolished the death penalty, leaving five inmates on death row. One of them, John Booth-El, died in prison this year. The governor said he had met or

spoken with many of the relatives of the people killed by the inmates. Some victim family members and prosecutors were upset with O’Malley’s decision. O’Malley said that if he didn’t commute the sentences the legal process would “needlessly and callously subject survivors, and the people of Maryland, to the ordeal of an endless appeals process, with unpredictable twists and turns, and without any hope of finality or closure.”

2nd suspect in LA patrol car shooting arrested

LOS ANGELES (AP) -- A second suspect was arrested Wednesday after a weekend shooting in which Los Angeles police officers came under fire. James Brooks, 19, was wanted in Sunday’s shooting and was captured by federal agents in Las Vegas, KNBC-TV reported. FBI spokeswoman Laura Eimiller confirmed the arrest but referred all questions on charges to the Los Angeles Police Department. An LAPD spokeswoman was unable to provide any information. Officers drove into the line of fire Sunday in a tough area of Los Angeles where gang members were shooting at rivals in another car, prosecutors said. Authorities were initially concerned the two officers had been ambushed just days after two New York City officers were killed. However, an investigation determined that the patrol car arrived at the scene as two gang members were shooting at a car as it drove away, prosecutors said. No one was injured after one of the unidentified officers returned fire. Christopher Taylor, 18, was arrested at the scene.



A firefighter sits on the roof next door to a burned building Wednesday, Dec. 31, 2014, in Dubois, Wyo., where an overnight fire destroyed three downtown buildings. Dubois, with a population of fewer than 1,000, is a popular winter destination for hunters and snowmobilers. AP

Wyoming town burns in subzero temps

CHEYENNE, Wyo. (AP) -- Huge flames ripped through historic buildings in the picturesque western Wyoming town of Dubois as firefighters contended with subzero temperatures that froze their hoses and other equipment.

Four buildings containing more than a dozen businesses were destroyed, but Mayor Twila Blakeman credited firefighters with keeping the flames from spreading even further.

“It was horrendous for them. They were, as usual, heroes,”

Blakeman said.

One destroyed building contained about 10 businesses. Also burned were a fly fishing shop and a gallery in the town of 1,000 that’s tucked between the Wind River and Absaroka mountain ranges.

Christmas lights glowed cheerfully on businesses against a dramatic backdrop of flames leaping dozens of feet into the sky after the fire was reported around 8:30 p.m. Tuesday. Firefighters had to contend not only with the

fire’s brutal heat but nail-biting cold: Temperatures overnight got down to 25 below zero.

Residents of the town banded together to help business owners salvage what they could from shops in the flames’ path, according to witness Kate Wiltshire, 45.

Wiltshire, the co-owner of the Turtle Ranch outside of town, said it was amazing to watch the town work together and the firefighters cope with the harsh conditions.

“It was a struggle for firefight-

ers because their equipment was freezing up,” Wiltshire said.

Firefighters became covered in ice as the water from their hoses froze, she said.

They had the flames under control by 5 a.m. Wednesday. The cause remained unknown and damage was still being assessed as firefighters mopped up the smoldering ruins Wednesday, Blakeman said.

Dubois is midway between Riverton and Jackson Hole in western Wyoming. The town is known as a gateway to western Wyoming’s scenic wildernesses including Grand Teton and Yellowstone national parks.

Asia

35 are killed, 48 are injured in Shanghai stampede

SHANGHAI (AP)—Thirty-five people died in a stampede during New Year's celebrations in Shanghai's historic waterfront area, city officials said Thursday—the worst disaster to hit one of China's showcase cities in recent years.

A Shanghai government statement said another 46 people were receiving hospital treatment, including 14 who were seriously injured, following the chaos about a half-hour before midnight. Two other injured had already left hospital.

The microblog of the People's Daily, which is run by the ruling Communist Party, said that 25 women and 10 men had died, aged between 36 and 16. The injured included 3 Taiwanese and one Malaysian, it said.

The official Xinhua News Agency quoted an unnamed witness as saying people had

scrambled for coupons that looked like dollar bills that were being thrown out of a third-floor window. It said the cause of the stampede was still under investigation.

At one of the hospitals where the injured were being treated, police brought photos out of dead victims who they had not been able to identify, causing dozens of waiting relatives to crowd around the table. Not everyone could see, and young women who looked at photographs someone had taken on a cellphone broke into tears.

A saleswoman in her 20s, who refused to give her name, said she had been celebrating the New Year with three friends. "I heard people screaming, someone fell, people shouted 'don't rush,'" she said, adding she could not reach one of her friends. "There were so many



people and I couldn't stand properly."

Xia Shujie, vice president of Shanghai No. 1 People's

Hospital, told media that some of the people brought to them were suffering from serious suffocation.

Xinhua said the deaths and injuries occurred at Chen Yi Square, which is in Shanghai's popular riverfront Bund area, an avenue lined with art deco buildings from the 1920s and 1930s when Shanghai was home to international banks and trading houses. The area is often jammed with spectators for major events.

On Thursday morning, dozens of police officers were in the area and tourists continued to wander by the square, a small patch of grass dominated by a statue of Chen Yi, the city's first Communist mayor.

Police stood guard at Shanghai No. 1 People's Hospital, where many of the injured were being treated. Earlier, relatives desperately seeking information had tried to push past guards at a hospital, state media photos showed. Guards had to use a bench to hold them back. Later, police were allowing family members into the hospital.

People who couldn't contact friends or family members went to the hospital. A man, who

gave only his surname, Wu, said he had traveled to Shanghai from a province in the south, Jiangxi, Thursday morning to look for his 23-year-old friend. She had gone to Shanghai to celebrate on the Bund with another friend, but one of their phones was powered off and the other had been lost and handed in to police, Wu said.

CCTV America, the U.S. version of state broadcaster China Central Television, posted video of Shanghai streets after the stampede, showing piles of discarded shoes amid the debris.

One photo from the scene shared by Xinhua showed at least one person doing chest compressions on a shirtless man while several other people lay on the ground nearby, amid debris. Another photo showed the area ringed by police.

Steps lead down from the square to a road across from several buildings. "We were down the stairs and wanted to move up and those who were upstairs wanted to move down, so we were pushed down by the people coming from upstairs," an injured man told Shanghai TV. "All those trying to move up fell down on the stairs."

Last week, the English-language Shanghai Daily reported that the annual New Year's Eve countdown on the Bund that normally attracts about 300,000 people had been cancelled, apparently because of crowd control issues. The report said a "toned-down" version of the event would be held instead but that it would not be open to the public.

Better weather allows AirAsia search to resume



PANGKALAN BUN, Indonesia (AP)—A much needed break in the weather gave searchers a window Thursday to "fight with full force" to find the victims of AirAsia Flight 8501, with officials also hustling to locate the plane's fuselage after it crashed into the Java Sea four days ago.

Seven of the 162 bodies have been recovered. Two are already in Surabaya, and four corpses—inside simple white boxes decorated with plastic flowers—were loaded onto a transport carrier Thursday morning in Pangkalan Bun on Borneo island. Another remains on a ship.

"The visibility is good this morning, we are ready to fight with full force to search for bodies, wreckage that can reveal what went wrong with this accident," said First Marshal Agus Dwi Putranto, an Air Force Operation commander helping to lead the effort, adding four aircraft were dispatched to the area just after sunrise.

Choppy conditions had prevented divers from entering the water on Wednesday, and helicopters were largely grounded, but 18 ships continued to survey the narrowed search area.

Sonar images identified what appeared to be large parts of the

plane, but strong currents were moving the debris. On Thursday, Singapore flew in an unmanned underwater vehicle capable of surveying the seabed to try to help pinpoint the wreckage, said Navy Maj. Teck Hong Heng.

Thursday's break in weather—blue skies and calm seas despite earlier storm predictions—could greatly speed up recovery efforts that have been severely hampered since the first bodies were spotted on Tuesday. Vice Air Marshal Sunarbowo Sandi, search and rescue coordinator in Pangkalan Bun, the closest town to the targeted area, said he was hopeful divers would soon be able to explore the wreckage site.

"It's possible the bodies are in the fuselage," he said. "So it's a race now against time and weather."

It is still unclear what brought the plane down about halfway into its two-hour flight from Surabaya, Indonesia to Singapore. The jet's last communication indicated the pilots were worried about bad weather. They sought permission to climb above threatening clouds but were denied because of heavy air traffic. Four minutes later, the airliner disappeared

National Search And Rescue Agency (BASARNAS) personnel carry the body of a victim on board the ill-fated AirAsia Flight 8501, from a helicopter upon arrival at the airport in Pangkalan Bun, Indonesia, Thursday, Jan. 1, 2015.

from the radar without issuing a distress signal.

The cockpit-voice and flight-data recorders, or black boxes, must be retrieved before officials can start determining what caused the crash. Some items recovered so far include a life jacket, an emergency exit window, children's shoes, a blue suitcase and backpacks filled with food.

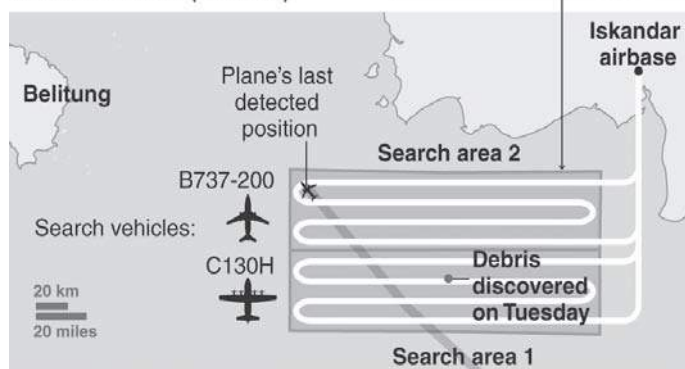
Simple wooden coffins—numbered 001 and 002—with purple flowers on top contained the first two bodies, which were sent Wednesday from Pangkalan Bun to Surabaya for autopsies. The two victims were a woman wearing blue jeans and a boy. Three males and two females were also recovered.

Nearly all the passengers were

AirAsia QZ8501 search narrows

Rescuers have narrowed their search for the missing airliner after debris and bodies were found on Tuesday.

SEARCH AREAS (Dec. 31)



Sources: F. Chan, Basarnas; Reuters

TNS

Huge fire destroys hundreds of Philippine shanties Thurs.

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—A huge fire, believed to have been ignited by firecrackers, razed hundreds of shanties in a creekside slum in metropolitan Manila Thursday in one of more than a dozen fires reported across the country as Filipinos welcomed the New Year.

Village officer Noel Carino said the fire, apparently sparked by firecrackers set off by children, erupted after dawn and was spread quickly by strong winds through nearly a kilometer-long (half a mile-long) row of shanties in a village in suburban Quezon city. Firefighters struggled to get near the burning shanties because of narrow alleys.

"It's really a tragic way to welcome the New Year," Ca-

rino said.

Residents struggled to save anything they could from the fire, including pet cats and dogs, with many using improvised floating devices to cross a murky river to escape from the fire.

Firefighters said hundreds of small shanties were destroyed, displacing thousands of poor families.

Bureau of Fire Protection spokesman Renato Marcial told ABS-CBN TV network that at least 14 fires were reported across the country as Filipinos ushered in 2015 with raucous parties.

At least seven people perished in two of the fires, Marcial said, adding some of the fires were thought to have been caused by firecrackers.

World

Palestinians to press war-crimes case against Israel

RAMALLAH, West Bank (AP) -- Turning up the pressure on Israel, the Palestinians announced Wednesday that they are joining the International Criminal Court to pursue war-crimes charges against the Jewish state - a risky, high-stakes move that brought threats of retaliation from Israel and criticism from the U.S.

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas acted a day after suffering a defeat in the U.N. Security Council, which voted down a resolution setting a three-year deadline for the establishment of a Palestinian state on lands occupied by Israel.

"We want to complain. There's aggression against us, against our land. The Security Council disappointed us," Abbas said.

Turning to the international court at The Hague marks a major policy shift, transforming Abbas' relations with Israel from tense to openly hostile. The ultimate goal is to pressure Israel into withdrawing from the territories and agreeing to Palestinian statehood.

The strategy carries risks, including the possibility the Palestinians themselves could be accused of war crimes over rocket attacks by the extremist group Hamas on Israeli population centers and other violence against Jewish targets.

Israeli Prime Minister Benja-



In this file photo taken Saturday, Jan. 11, 2014, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas speaks during a meeting at his compound in the West Bank city of Ramallah.

min Netanyahu vowed to take unspecified "retaliatory steps." In Washington, State Department spokesman Jeff Rathke said the U.S. was "deeply troubled" by the Palestinians' "escalatory step." He said it was "entirely counterproductive and does nothing to further the aspirations of the Palestinian people for a sovereign and independent state."

At the international court, the Palestinians could seek to have Israeli military or political figures prosecuted for alleged crimes involving settlement construction on occupied lands

or actions by the military that cause heavy civilian casualties, for instance.

Israel is not a member of the court and does not recognize its jurisdiction. And the court has no police force and no authority to go into Israel and arrest suspects. But it could issue arrest warrants that would make it difficult for Israeli officials to travel abroad.

Abbas has been under heavy pressure to take stronger action against Israel amid months of rising tensions over the collapse of U.S.-brokered peace talks last spring, a 50-day war between Israel and Palestinian militants in Gaza over the summer, a recent spate of deadly Palestinian attacks on Israeli targets, and Israeli restrictions on access to a key Muslim holy site in Jerusalem.

The Palestinians planned

to submit the paperwork for joining the ICC to U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on Wednesday afternoon, but postponed it, probably until Friday. Handing over the documents is the last formal step for Palestine to become a member of the ICC, which would happen in about 60 days.

Israel could take a number of retaliatory actions, including building more settlements, restricting financial transfers to the Palestinians, or curbing certain privileges. The U.S. has not said how it will react, but it provides hundreds of millions of dollars in aid to the Palestinians.

In a statement, Netanyahu said Israel will protect its troops from prosecution, calling the country's army "the most moral" in the world. He warned that Abbas' Palestinian Authority is

"the one who needs to fear the International Criminal Court."

The court would be able to prosecute only crimes committed from here on in, not past offenses, said Robbie Sabel, an international law expert at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Sabel agreed the Palestinians themselves could be at risk of prosecution.

"On the other side of the coin - and this is why the Palestinians have hesitated up until now - is that any Palestinian who commits a war crime anywhere in the world and has not been tried by a Palestinian court could also be subject to the jurisdiction of the court," he said. "So it works both ways."

The Palestinian U.N. ambassador, Riyad Mansour, has said repeatedly that the Palestinians are not afraid of that possibility.

Balkees Jarrah, international justice counsel at Human Rights Watch, called the Palestinian move to join the court "an overdue but welcome step toward impartial justice for serious crimes by Israelis and Palestinians alike. This move by Ramallah sends a strong message that the days of near total impunity that have characterized this conflict could be ending."

The Palestinians seek the West Bank, Gaza Strip and east Jerusalem - areas captured by Israel in 1967. Netanyahu, who is seeking re-election in March, has said Palestinian independence can be achieved only through negotiations.

Turning to the court became an option for Abbas in 2012 after the United Nations recognized "Palestine" as a non-member observer state.

Italy: 98 still unaccounted for from fire-ravaged ferry



Some 40 of the survivors of the Norman Atlantic ferry fire finally stepped ashore, in the port of Taranto, Italy, Wednesday, Dec. 31, 2014.

Suicide bomber at Yemen ceremony kills at least 24

SANAA, Yemen (AP) -- A suicide bomber attacked a ceremony Wednesday hosted by Shiite rebels commemorating the birth of the Prophet Muhammad, killing at least 24 people and wounding 48 in a country plagued by militants, authorities said.

No group immediately claimed responsibility for the attack on a cultural center in the city of Ibb, some 190 kilometers (120 miles) from the capital, Sanaa, though Yemen's local al-Qaida branch has carried out similar attacks in the past. Civilian officials, Shiite rebels, a famed poet and a leader of a political party all died in the attack, which left blood soaking the floor of an auditorium as men wailed to God.

Mohammed Abdel-Baki, the local spokesman for the Houthi rebels, said the governor of Ibb province had been at the event, but wasn't wounded. He described the attack as a "massacre."

"The torn body parts are everywhere. Pools of blood mixed with water. The scene is horrifying," he said. Abdel-Baki said the local hospital in Ibb had 24 corpses from the

attack. Yemen's Interior Ministry put the toll at 23 people killed and 48 wounded.

Two other explosions rocked Ibb following the first attack, the Houthis said, but it wasn't clear if they caused casualties.

The Houthis seized large areas of Yemen, including Sanaa, earlier this year as part of a protracted power struggle with President Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi. Their critics view them as a proxy for Shiite Iran, charges the rebels deny.

In a brief statement, Hadi vowed to chase the terrorists who carried out the attack, saying: "They will not escape prosecution."

Meanwhile, in the central city of Radda, a security official said series of blasts that targeted Houthi positions killed at least five people. He spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak to journalists.

The city has been a battleground between al-Qaida fighters and allied tribes and Houthis for the past months before the militant group's withdrawal. The group carries out near-daily attacks on Houthis.

BRINDISI, Italy (AP) -- Stormy weather in the Adriatic Sea thwarted efforts Wednesday to tow a fire-ravaged ferry to Italy so authorities can investigate the blaze that killed at least 11 people and search the ship for more possible dead.

Ninety-eight people were still unaccounted for Wednesday after a pre-dawn fire raced through the Norman Atlantic ferry on Sunday, Bari prosecutor Giuseppe Volpe was quoted as saying by the ANSA news agency.

It's not clear if those people ever boarded the ferry - which left Greece on Saturday bound for Italy - if they were rescued, or if they died in the fire or in the sea. Hundreds were rescued

in the maritime disaster, but the exact number of ferry survivors and how many were onboard to begin with are still not known.

Volpe said he hoped that Greek authorities would be able to say many people had been rescued by various ships and brought to Greece. Greece's coast guard later said nine Greeks were still missing but did not resolve other questions.

Greece's merchant marine ministry said Italy is not giving the ministry lists of who has been rescued and mishandling the process of identifying the rescued and missing.

"We maintain reservations as to the precise number of rescued people that we can make public, as the information forwarded to

us so far by Italian authorities contains names listed twice and misspellings in the names registered," the ministry said in a statement.

Volpe told Sky TG24 TV it was important to have the ferry towed to Italy "to see if there are bodies aboard...to ascertain what caused the fire and to see if safety measures were respected."

He said until the wreck was examined, he couldn't venture a possible cause for the blaze.

The Italian captain of the Italian-made ferry, which was operated by a Greek company, was questioned in the southern port of Bari by prosecutors for more than five hours Wednesday. Since a probe is underway, Volpe would not give any de-

tails about the questioning.

Nearly 40 survivors finally stepped ashore Wednesday in the Italian port of Taranto, brought by one of the cargo ships that rescued passengers from the flaming, smoke-shrouded ferry in the first hours of the maritime disaster. The blaze on the ferry's car deck sent people scrambling for their lives in the freezing cold, pelted by rain and buffeted by gale-force winds on the uncovered top deck.

Amateur video made by two Turkish passengers who spent two days aboard the ferry showed clouds of black smoke belched up by the fire and bursts of flame as survivors lined up to be rescued by helicopters.

Off The Wall

Hasbro to replace penis-shaped Play-Doh toy

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (AP)

-- It was an embarrassing Christmas for Nivea Cabrera after she was accused by her fiancé's mother of letting her 5-year-old granddaughter play with a sex toy. A mortified Carbrera asked the child where she got the penis-shaped plastic cylinder.

"It's from my Play-Doh," the girl replied.

Hasbro, the Pawtucket-based toy company, is now doing damage control over the extruder tool in its Play-Doh Cake Mountain toy. The two-piece syringe-like tool, which includes a tube with corkscrew-type ridges around the outside and a dome-shaped top with a hole at the tip, can be used to squeeze Play-Doh to look like decorative cake frosting.

Complaints have been surfacing since at least November, when Tulsa, Oklahoma, TV station KTUL asked them what they thought. The station blurred the image of the tool during the piece, saying it was due to parents' reactions. One woman told the station it was "a pretty phallic cake-decorat-

ing piece."

After Christmas, comments started pouring in to Play-Doh's Facebook page, including from Cabrera, of Lancaster, Pennsylvania. She said Hasbro called her after she posted a photo of the tool and asked about the shape on Christmas Day. She said the company offered to send her a replacement tool in a different shape, which she has not received.

Erin Rivers, a mother of two from Melbourne, Florida, thought it was hilarious when she helped her 6-year-old daughter open the box.

"I pulled out this extruder tool, and I just started cracking up at it, I couldn't help it. Then I immediately put the Play-Doh in it and took a picture of," she said.

Then, she posted it on Facebook.

"My friends have just as dirty minds as I do," she said. "It was hysterical to me. And then I gave it my daughter to play with."

She said her daughter and 4-year-old son don't notice anything strange about the toy.



Hasbro Inc. has received thousands of comments on the Play-Doh Facebook page pointing out the obvious.

"We are in the process of updating all future Play-Doh products with a different tool,"

it said in a statement posted on the page Tuesday.

It also offered to replace the tool for anyone who has complaints.

Rivers, who works in a pediatric dental office, says she's

This undated photo provided by Nivea Cabrera shows the "extruder tool" from Hasbro's Play-Doh Cake Mountain toy.

not upset at all. But she is flabbergasted that the toy slipped past so many layers of people at Hasbro.

Charges dismissed over \$60K found by remodelers

WASHINGTON, Pa. (AP)

-- Four home remodelers no longer face criminal charges for spending \$60,000 they found hidden inside a western Pennsylvania home.

The Washington Observer-Reporter reported Tuesday that theft and related charges were dismissed earlier this month.

A judge said the four were working as under-the-table laborers, fixing up an unoccupied house, when they found the money hidden in a second-floor dormer. The newest bills dated to the 1980s.

The men were working for a contractor who had bought the home from a dead man's estate.

"They have to have someone who creates it, someone who makes the plastic mold, someone who plays with it," she said. "I can't imagine that as many people that probably saw the toy, not one person said, 'Does anyone else think this looks like a penis?'"

The men didn't report their find and split the cash. The contractor learned of the money and reported them to police.

The judge says that because the money's owner can't be readily identified, the four can't have the intent to deprive the owner of the cash.

OFFBEAT BRIEFS

Police probe alcohol as factor in fish truck crash

EUGENE, Ore. (AP) -- Oregon state police are investigating whether the driver of a tanker truck was drunk when it crashed and spilled thousands of baby salmon onto a road in western Oregon. The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife estimates 11,000 juvenile salmon died in Tuesday's wreck on state Route 126 east of Eugene. The truck was hauling salmon from a hatchery that's low on water because of problems with a dam on the McKenzie River. The fish were going to be released in a river south of Eugene. State police Lt. Josh Brooks told The Register-Guard the initial blood test showed the driver had a blood-alcohol level more than three times the legal limit. The driver was taken to a hospital with a broken shoulder. His name hasn't been released.

Cars buried in salt after Morton storage collapse

CHICAGO (AP) -- A wall at a Morton Salt storage facility has collapsed, burying several cars at a next-door auto dealership in road salt. Company spokeswoman Denise Lauer says a side wall broke Tuesday afternoon, spilling road salt outside of the facility on Chicago's northwest side and onto the neighboring property. Morton Salt Inc. is a more than 100-year-old company based in Chicago best known for its pourable table salt. No injuries were reported. Chicago Fire Department spokesman Larry Langford says the collapse happened around 2 p.m. He says several cars are buried in salt. He says city engineers will look at the building's structural integrity. Chicago police spokesman Thomas Sweeney says officers responded to a call about the collapse. He did not have further details.

Resident defies Ohio deadline on 'Zombie Nativity'

CINCINNATI (AP) -- A "Zombie Nativity" scene in a southwest Ohio suburb was still undead Tuesday, past the deadline to remove it.

Sycamore Township officials said last week they had received complaints about debris at the

home and concluded that the display violated zoning rules on size and placement of yard structures. They sent resident Jasen Dixon two zoning violation notices and gave him until the day after Christmas to take it down.

Facing a fine and legal ac-

tion, Dixon kept the display up. A Facebook page devoted to the scene urges support for "freedom of expression."

The township administrator, Greg Bickford, said Tuesday the owner will face fines of up to \$250 a day. Officials say

they're not anti-zombie, but pro-zoning rules.

"The property owner will be cited for failure to remove the structure," Bickford said via email. "Not the zombies, but the structure."

Dixon indicated he planned to take the display down, but

not for forever. He has started an online crowdfunding effort to build an even better display next year - and to help cover township citations.

The scene has eerie figures including a demonic-looking creature sitting up in the manger where the baby Jesus would be in traditional Christmas nativities. There's a detached head with it in the manger, while another ghoulish figure holds a replica heart in its hand as a somber "Silent Night" plays in the background.

"We do live in a free country, don't we?" asked Judy Giese, who lives down the block from Dixon on Vorhees Lane (not related to "Friday the 13th" movie slasher Jason Voorhees). Auto paint and body shops line the other side of the road in the township nearly 15 miles north-east of Cincinnati.

Dixon manages a haunted house attraction and used figures from a Halloween display to create what he calls a holiday decoration.

Giese said she and her husband took down their own small nativity scene and lights after Christmas. She doesn't mind if Dixon expands his display, as long as it's not into her yard.

"It's different," she said, adding that it was quite a hit with guests at their Christmas party. "It's like being next to an amusement park."



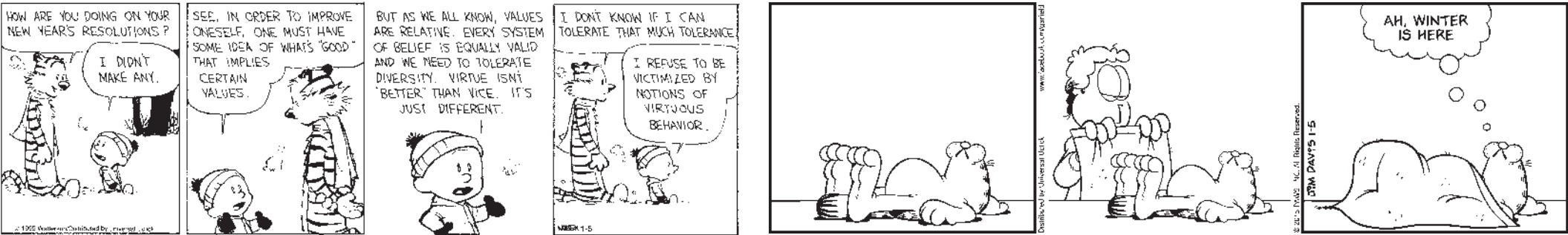
A "Zombie Nativity" scene stands on the front yard of Jasen Dixon's home in Sycamore Township, Ohio, near Cincinnati, Tuesday, Dec. 30, 2014.

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson Garfield®

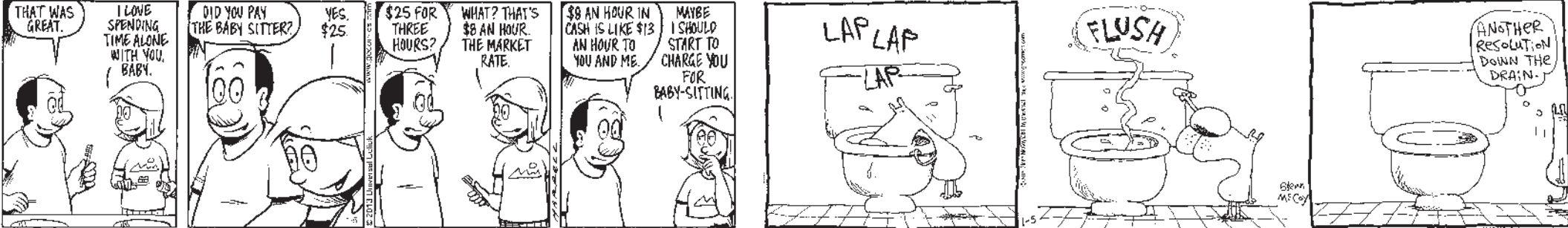
By Jim Davis



Adam@home

By Bryan Basset The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Call a halt to

5 Got a glimpse of

8 Creche figure

12 Siamese

13 Sub-machine gun

14 Eye layer

15 — and crafts

16 Camera insert

18 Composer Mahler

20 Old radio sitcom, “— Tavern”

21 Not procrastinating

23 Spy novel org.

24 Reinvest

28 Crazy

31 Greek mountain

32 Canonical hour

34 Modern (Pref.)

35 Moist, as morning grass

37 Attendance tally

39 “For shame!”

41 Track component

42 Bottles for oil and vinegar

45 Low-budget film

49 Race car’s frame-work

51 Relinquish

52 “— Lang Syne”

53 Zero

54 Boat’s backbone

55 Ottoman rulers

56 Type measures

57 Hot tubs

DOWN

1 Male deer

2 By way of, for short

3 Feedbag fill

4 Handgun

5 Jeff

6 Nitrogenic dye

7 Untamed

8 “Oh, do you know the — man?”

9 Regional bird life

10 Depend (on)

11 Sweet potatoes’ kin

17 Capt. Jean— Picard

19 Soon, in verse

22 Male singing voice

24 Disen-cumber

25 Rhyming praise

26 Within the rules

27 Changes the tags

29 — Aviv

30 Scale note

33 Slender

36 Gives way

38 Time-pieces

40 And so forth (abbr.)

42 Grouch

43 Libertine

44 Logical

46 Biden, familiarly

47 Concept

48 Slithery swimmers

50 Martini ingredient

Solution time: 27 mins.

Friday’s answer 1-5

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: January Jones, 37; Bradley Cooper, 40; Carrie Ann Inaba, 47; Diane Keaton, 69.

Happy Birthday: Emotional pressure must be handled delicately. Keep a steady pace, combined with balance and commitment, to follow through with practical plans. Refuse to let the changes going on around you intimidate you or tempt you to jump into something that will cloud your vision and stifle the ambitions and plans you set out to achieve. Your numbers are 2, 5, 13, 24, 33, 36, 43.

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Use intelligence, innovation and energy to attract favors as well as the support you need to reach your goals. Steady progress will be yours if you remain goal-oriented professionally and strive for commitment in your personal life. ***

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Live and learn. Listen carefully to the information offered and determine whether or not you are in a position to take advantage. A practical approach will far exceed the outcome of a well-meaning mistake based on poor information. ****

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Use whatever information you can gather to get ahead. You can raise your status, reputation and appeal if you are responsible and see matters through to the end. What you do to improve your surroundings will benefit you emotionally and mentally. ***

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Use your imagination if someone tries to push you in a direction that isn’t in your best interest. Follow the road less traveled and pursue your

own thing. Success will be yours if you engage in pursuits that you enjoy. ***

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Check out pursuits that show promise and an opportunity to use your skills. Listen and observe how your peers react to the changes going on in your industry. A positive attitude will help you surpass any competition you face. ***

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Draw on your resources in order to get your plans up and running. A personal problem will persist if you keep changing your mind. Be responsible, take care of business and move on. If something isn’t working, change it. ****

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Think matters through before you make a move. Emotions will be difficult to control, making it best to offer a friendly demeanor and an open mind. Change may be inevitable, but taking the right steps will be necessary to ensure good results. **

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Work quietly on your own. Avoid any run-ins with peers, friends or relatives. Learn from past experience and be prepared to take an alternate route if it will ensure your safety and emotional well-being. Keep life simple and moderate. *****

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): A call for help will be answered. The changes you want to make at home can be implemented if you are disciplined and aggressive. Romance is in the stars, and making a stronger commitment will bring you closer to someone you love. ***

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Emotions will flare up, causing unexpected situations that leave you questioning what to do next. Don’t hesitate to resort to an obscure course of action. It’s important to take control if you want to maintain your status quo. ***

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Put your finances in order and look into ways you can use your talents to bring in extra cash. A service that you feel is required in your community can be the start of a new beginning and a lucrative future. ***

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Network and mingle with people working in an industry that interests you. Looking for someone to partner with will lead to a new opportunity and good fortune. Don’t sell yourself short. It’s OK to brag if you are sure you can deliver. *****

Birthday Baby: You are reserved, competitive and challenging. You are friendly but distant.

Eugenia’s website—eugenialast.com, Eugenia’s android app @ <http://bit.ly/exhoro> and join Eugenia on [twitter](https://twitter.com/eugenialast)/[facebook](https://facebook.com/eugenialast)/[linkedin](https://linkedin.com/company/eugenialast).

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku By Dave Green

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Last Friday’s SUDOKU Answer

Difficulty Level ★ 1/05

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WONDERWORD By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD. The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

PLACEMENTS Solution: 8 letters

T S O S U G A R F A T I G U E
N N B H C L B E N E F I T S T
E I E A C R I N J E C T I T N
M H C M A L E Q T C E F F E A
T P O I E R I A U C A S E L L
A R N R Y V E N M I T N S B U
E O R O T C O D I L D S U A M
R D A U E K E R U C T A R T I
T N P T I S C S P C S T G H T
L E P C X I E N A M E U E T S
A P E O N R I F T E I I R L T
B L A M A T D V I D S E Y A U
R E S E A R C H E E C I V E D
E H E L U S S E N L L I D H Y
H S E G N A H C T E S T I N G

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Anxiety, Appraise, Benefits, Brain, Case, Changes, Clinics, Cream, Device, Disease, Doctor, Drug, Effect, Endorphins, Facts, Fatigue, Guide, Health, Help, Herbal, Illness, Improvement, Inject, Latin, Liquid, Nocebo, Outcome, Patient, Reduce, Relief, Research, Results, Risk, Sham, Stimulant, Study, Sugar, Surgery, Tablets, Testing, Treatment

Last Friday’s Answer: Laser

Purchase WONDERWORD books in time for the holidays! Visit wonderword.universaluclick.com or call 1-800-642-6480.

STUMPED? For answers to today’s crossword, call 1-900-226-5955! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

Science & Technology

New technologies harvest energy from movements, sound and more

By **STEVE JOHNSON**
SAN JOSE MERCURY NEWS

SAN JOSE, Calif.—Fed up with constantly having to recharge or replace batteries in your ever-expanding trove of electronic gadgets? The solution may be just a few steps away.

“Energy harvesting” promises to power innumerable consumer devices, often with nothing more than your body’s movement or heat. Dozens of companies around the world already offer such products, primarily for controlling lighting and temperature-control systems, but many experts believe the market for the technology could explode thanks to electronic gadgets being developed for the Internet of Things.

“It’s huge,” said Graham Martin, CEO of the EnOcean Alliance, a San Ramon-based group of businesses that promotes wireless energy-harvesting technologies.

With the Internet of Things expected to incorporate billions of devices, “if they’re all battery-powered, we’ll have a problem because there’s not enough lithium in the world,” he added. “So a lot of them will have to use energy harvesting.”

Among the most basic forms of the technology is body power. When certain materials are squeezed or stretched, the movement of their atoms creates an electrical charge. Automatic watches have employed the concept for decades, for example, by winding themselves

when their user moves their arm. Now, the concept is being considered for a multitude of other devices.

Consumer electronics giant Philips sells a switch that wirelessly operates room lights, powered only by the tap of a finger. A similar light switch developed by EcoHarvester of Berkeley, displayed at the 2014 Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas, gets its energy when someone merely gives it a turn.

Leg power also has promise, according to energy consultant Christine Hertzog. By generating electricity from students walking across a floor, she has blogged, “schools could harness the pitter-patter of little feet to power some of their building needs.”

TECH Q&A

Beware of pop-up messages that offer software

By **STEVE ALEXANDER**
STAR TRIBUNE (MINNEAPOLIS)

Q: I downloaded a new software driver that a pop-up message said I needed.

Because the message contained the Microsoft logo (it was from a Microsoft Gold Certified Partner), I figured it must be OK. Along with the driver came a program called SlimCleaner Plus, which I haven’t used. While I’m not having any problems, I’m concerned that I can’t uninstall the driver or the program. What should I do?

A: You were right to be suspicious of software that can’t be uninstalled, although in this case no harm was done. SlimCleaner Plus is a legitimate program that exhibits some bizarre behavior because of the way it works.

The software is a \$30-a-year PC utility program that eliminates unnecessary files that can slow down a PC (the download and its scan of your PC are free, but it will only delete useless files if you pay). To do its job, the program runs invisibly in the background of your PC. It can only be uninstalled if you first turn it off. That’s a safeguard to

prevent the software from being interrupted while it works with critical files such as the Registry that contains PC settings.

Unfortunately, the installation directions for SlimCleaner Plus don’t tell you how to uninstall it. To turn the program off, right-click its icon on the right side of the Windows taskbar, then choose “shut down” on the resulting menu. Once you do, both the software driver and program should be easily uninstalled. (See tinyurl.com/ppq9kfe for more details on how to uninstall the software if you are using Windows Vista, Windows 7 or Windows 8.)

In the future, I suggest that you be suspicious of any website message that urges you to download unfamiliar software. Anyone can steal a familiar logo to make a pop-up message (or a malicious email) look legitimate.

Q: The software I previously used to stream photos and music from my Windows 8.1 PC to my HDTV is no longer available. I’ve been trying unsuccessfully to replace it with the Google Chromecast device that plugs into one of the TV’s HDMI ports. Do you have any suggestions on how

to make it work?

A: Google Chromecast, a Wi-Fi device that moves video and other files around your home network, can be set up in six different ways, depending on what you’re trying to accomplish (see tinyurl.com/1949wa5). In nearly all situations, you must be using a Wi-Fi router that operates in the 2.4 gigahertz part of the radio spectrum.

I suggest you use method one (see setup details at tinyurl.com/k2nhkrt), which streams video, music or photos from your PC’s Google Chrome browser to your TV’s Chromecast device. The video will be low-end HDTV quality, or 720p. The “p” is for progressive scan, in which 720 horizontal lines on the screen are refreshed progressively one after the other. The highest-quality HD signal is 1080p, which stands for 1,080 lines that are progressively displayed.

Steve Alexander covers technology for the Minneapolis Star Tribune. Readers may write to him at Tech Q&A, 425 Portland Ave. S., Minneapolis, Minn. 55488-0002; email: steve.j.alexander@gmail.com. Please include a full name, city and phone number.

Body power for electronic devices

Manufacturers are thinking of ways to capture energy from people’s movements to power connected devices, which could make plugging in to recharge batteries a thing of the past.

Capturing body heat

Intel has awarded \$5,000 for a concept to convert the temperature difference between a person’s body and a special garment into electricity for mobile gadgets. An Oregon company called Perpetua is developing a similar product aimed at athletes, patients and emergency first responders.

Shake it on

Watches powered through kinetics — charging from the arm’s movements — are the most well-known energy-harvesting devices currently available, but future gadgets may use similar tech. Apple has patented a system that will charge devices by shaking them, with video recorders and cameras as targeted devices.

Brace on the battlefield

BionicPower of Canada has developed a knee brace with Canadian and U.S. military officials that will generate electricity while walking, allowing soldiers to recharge battery-powered devices in the field.

Powerful steps

Capturing energy created by footsteps is gaining in popularity — some European nightclubs have floors that compress to generate electricity from people dancing.

Graphic: Dave Johnson, Bay Area News Group/TNS
Reporting: Steven Johnson, Bay Area News Group

In Celebration of Her New Life

In Loving Memory of

Martha Muna Mendiola

Born to Life: September 3, 1927

Born to Eternal Life: December 28, 2014

In Her New Life, she now joins her:

Parents: †Jose P. / †Elena DLG Diaz Muna
Parent In-Law: †Joaquin M. / †Dolores S. Mendiola
Husband: †Esteban Sablan Mendiola

Brothers/Sisters In-Law:

†Juan S. & †Rosalia C. Mediola / †Ramon S. & †Maria S. Cabrera / †Juanita M & †George F. Fleming / †Froilan T. Camacho / †Miguel Magofna / †Jesus Arriola / †Ramon LG & †Theodora M. Bermudes / †Moses & †Andresina D. Muna / †Tobias D. & †Estephania Sn. Muna / †Amparo D. Muna / †Joaquina M. & †Juan S. Cabrera / †Jesus D. & †Nieves W. Muna / †Manuel D. Muna

Daughter In-Law:

†Bennet B. Mendiola

Her Memory will live forever in the hearts of her:

Sisters In-Law: Elphidia R. Muna / Estefania Arriola / Asako Magofna
Children: Nicolas & Dolly Muna and Children
Rainhard & Annie Mendiola and children
Arnold & Gui Yun (Winnie) Chen Mendiola and children
Donald & Ma. Lourdes Mendiola and children
Joseph M. Mendiola and children
Bobbie A. & †Juan Torres and children
Joanne Santos & Jesse Babauta and daughter
John Dave Mendiola

She will also be missed and remembered by numerous grandchildren, great-grandchildren, cousins, nieces, nephews, relatives and friends.

Daily Mass is offered at 6:00am at Mount Carmel Cathedral.

On Monday, January 5, 2015 at 8:00 am, her remains will be escorted from Borja Funeral Homes to Mount Carmel Cathedral for viewing and last respects. Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at 11:00am, followed by the Interment Service at Chalan Kanoa Cemetery.

Your kind expressions of support and prayers are greatly appreciated.

From the Children & Family

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REM GUALO RAI
Warehouse #3 - Size: 4,000sq/ft
\$0.65 per sq/ft. Negotiable
REM LOWERBASE
Warehouse #2 - Size: 6,000sq/ft
\$0.45 per sq/ft. Negotiable
FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CALL
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EXAMINATION ANNOUNCEMENT NO. CCC-14-001
OPENING DATE: 12/24/14
CLOSING DATE: 01/07/15

This examination is for the purpose of developing an Open Competitive and Promotional Eligibility list. It is the policy of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands that the personnel system will be applied and administered according to the principle of equal opportunity for all citizens and nationals as defined by the Northern Marianas Commonwealth Constitution regardless of age, sex, religion, political affiliation or belief, marital status, disability or place of origin.

POSITION AND SALARY: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Salary is commensurate with qualifications and experience.

LOCATION: Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

POSITION SUMMARY
The Executive Director is responsible for the overall administration of the Commonwealth Casino Commission (the "Commission" or "CCC"). The Executive Director ensures that the Commission exercises its authority in compliance with Public Law 18-56 and other Commonwealth laws, Agreements, Rules and Regulations. He/She will be responsible for directing and managing the regulatory activities of the Commission to ensure the gaming industry performs in compliance with the provisions of the Commonwealth Casino Act of 2014 (Public Law 18-56) as well as industry best practices. The Executive Director reports to and is supervised by the Commission.

Note: This job posting is intended to describe the general nature and level of work to be performed by the assigned person. It is not intended to be an exhaustive list of all responsibilities, duties, skills or working conditions.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATION
Pursuant to CNMI Public Law 18-56 § 2315

- A Bachelor's Degree from a United States accredited educational institution or equivalent
- Five (5) years work experience in professional, administrative or management in government or private sectors
- Good ethical and moral character
- Must possess a clean criminal history and must not have been convicted of any crime in any jurisdiction of the United States, or any foreign country carrying a minimum sentence of imprisonment of more than six months, excepting traffic offence
- Must not have any interest, directly or indirectly, in any business under the jurisdiction of the Commission

MINIMUM BACKGROUND REQUIREMENTS
Applicant must submit to and pass background screen, including, but not limited to drug and criminal record investigation. Certain information discovered could result in ineligibility for employment with the Commonwealth Casino Commission. The Commission will require a personal financial disclosure prior to making a final decision.

Applicant must be a US Citizen or US Permanent Resident. CNMI Government Excepted Service benefits will apply.

INTERESTED INDIVIDUALS SHOULD REQUEST A COPY OF THE COMPLETE JOB DESCRIPTION.

CONTACT PERSON:
Ruth Ann P. Sakisat
Commonwealth Casino Commission
C/O The Office of the Governor, 1st Floor
PO Box 500135
Saipan MP 96950
(670) 237-2214

OR EMAIL REQUEST TO:
commonwealthcasinocommission@gmail.com

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ADS	(PRINT)	COMBO (PRINT AND ONLINE)
• 3-Liner	\$15	\$30
• 5-Liner	\$24	\$45

ADVERTISING DEADLINE

Classified Ads

Ads must be submitted before 12 noon 2 days prior to publication date

CANCELLATION

Classified Ads

Cancellations should be made before 12 noon of the day prior to date of publication.

REFUNDS

Refunds will only be made if cancellation deadlines are met. No refunds will be made once ad is already printed.

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Saipan Tribune will not be responsible for errors after the first day of publication. Errors should be called in before noon of the issue date. Saipan Tribune reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

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Life & Style

2015 begins: Shanghai tragedy, fireworks elsewhere

Revelers converged on the beaches of Brazil, the skyscrapers of Dubai and New York's Times Square to say good riddance to a turbulent 2014 marred by terror woes, Ebola outbreaks and a horrific series of airline disasters.

But tragedy struck in Shanghai, Baghdad was on edge and protesters in the United States planned a sobering reminder of one of the year's biggest stories.

A look around the world:

■ NEW YORK, NEW YORK

A million people crammed into New York's Times Square saw the new year in with kisses, hugs and cheers after the giant, glittering New Year's Eve ball descended and a ton of confetti rained down.

Mayor Bill de Blasio, flanked by his wife and two children, pushed the ceremonial button that set the 11,875-pound Waterford crystal ball in motion. Revelers from around the world waving pink balloons and wearing pink foam hats exchanged good wishes and danced as Frank Sinatra's "New York, New York" blared on loudspeakers.

Agustina Bernacchia, a tourist from Argentina, had arrived early to secure her spot. She said she wanted to experience the New Year's Eve party she'd always seen on TV.

"It was a dream for us," Bernacchia said.

■ STAMPEDE IN SHANGHAI

Thirty-five people were killed in a stampede during New Year's celebrations in downtown Shanghai, city officials said.

South Korean to drop Sony film in North by balloon

By **HYUNG-JIN KIM**
ASSOCIATED PRESS

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—A South Korean activist said Wednesday that he will launch balloons carrying DVDs of Sony's "The Interview" toward North Korea to try to break down a personality cult built around dictator Kim Jong Un.

The comedy depicting an assassination attempt on Kim is at the center of tension between North Korea and the U.S., with Washington blaming Pyongyang for crippling hacking attacks on Sony Entertainment. Pyongyang denies that and has vowed to retaliate.

Activist Park Sang-hak said he will start dropping 100,000 DVDs and USBs with the movie by balloon in North Korea as early as late January. Park, a North Korean defector, said he's partnering with the U.S.-based non-profit Human Rights Foundation, which is financing the making of the DVDs and USB memory sticks of the movie with Korean subtitles.



Fireworks erupt after midnight in Times Square during the New Year's Eve celebration, Thursday, Jan. 1, 2015, in New York. Thousands braved the cold to watch the annual ball drop and ring in the new year.

The deaths - the worst disaster to hit one of China's showcase cities in years - occurred a half-hour before midnight at Shanghai's popular riverfront Bund area, which can be jammed with spectators for major events. A Shanghai government statement said Thursday that another 46 people were receiving hospital treatment, including 14 who were seriously injured.

The official Xinhua News

Agency quoted an unnamed witness as saying people had scrambled for coupons that looked like dollar bills that were being thrown out of a third-floor window. It said the cause of the stampede was under investigation.

■ BREAKING A RECORD IN DUBAI

The Gulf Arab emirate of Dubai was aiming to break the world record for the largest LED-il-

luminated facade with its spectacular display centered on the world's tallest building.

Some 70,000 LED panels around the 2,722-foot Burj Khalifa flashed colored lights and projected images of the country's leaders when clocks there struck midnight as a massive fireworks display erupted. The celebration draws throngs of thousands of spectators every New Year's Eve.

Emaar Properties said a team from Guinness World Records monitored the preparations. Last year, Dubai won the title for the world's largest firework

display, according to Guinness.

■ WATCHING THE BALL - OR WHATEVER - DROP

The ball drop is a tradition that's being increasingly copied across the United States with twists celebrating local icons.

Among the items being dropped: a big chili in Las Cruces, New Mexico; a replica peach in Atlanta; a musical note in Nashville, Tennessee; a large pine cone in Flagstaff, Arizona; an oversized spurred cowboy boot in Prescott, Arizona; a 600-pound (270-kilogram) walleye made of wood and fiberglass in Port Clinton,

Ohio; an 80-pound (36-kilogram) wedge of cheese in Plymouth, Wisconsin; and in Escanaba, in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, a replica of a pasty (pronounced PAS'-tee) - a baked pastry filled with meat and potatoes.

■ TRYING TO CELEBRATE IN BAGHDAD

In Iraq's war-scarred capital, Baghdad authorities ordered a one-off lifting of the overnight curfew in force for more than a decade to allow the city's revelers to stay out late on the streets.

Traffic was unusually heavy starting shortly after sunset and authorities closed commercial streets to vehicles in the city's center as a precaution against possible suicide bombings by militants of the Islamic State terror group.

■ WASTING AWAY IN BVI

Thousands of partiers arrived on speedboats, yachts and ferries to dance the night away on the tiny Caribbean island of Jost Van Dyke that has long hosted one of the region's biggest, most uninhibited New Year's Eve bashes.

In the British Virgin Islands, Jost Van Dyke balloons from about 300 full-time residents to roughly 5,000 people each New Year's Eve as throngs of barefoot, tipsy people groove to reggae bands on white sands and hop from bar to bar. The annual tradition started in the 1960s on the idyllic island - so small it didn't get electricity until 1992.

"Every year it just gets bigger and bigger. People from all over travel here to get drunk, fall down and just have as much fun as they can," said Tessa Callwood, who runs a world-famous beach bar with her husband, Foxy's Tamarind Bar & Restaurant.

Ex-college football player charged with stalking mogul

LOS ANGELES (AP)—A former North Dakota college football player who was kicked off his team after kissing an older man is facing a charge of stalking billionaire David Geffen.

Jamie Ralph Kuntz, 21, was ordered Wednesday to return to Los Angeles Superior Court on charges that he repeatedly violated an order to stay away from the entertainment mogul.

Kuntz pleaded not guilty earlier this month and is being held on \$150,000 bail.

Kuntz was kicked off the North Dakota State College of Sciences football team two years ago after kissing a 65-year-old boyfriend in the press box.

Kuntz says he lost his place as linebacker because he was gay, though the coach says he was re-

moved for lying about the kiss.

Defense lawyer David Wohl said his client had a short-term physical relationship with Geffen that became a case of unrequited love. He disputed that Kuntz threatened Geffen or put him in fear for his safety, which is required to support a felony stalking charge.

The charges were filed after Kuntz pleaded guilty this fall to misdemeanor trespassing on Geffen's property and was sentenced to four months in jail and three years of probation.

"He was on the wrong side of celebrity justice," Wohl said. "That's 120 more days than your average person gets for trespass. Consider who the alleged victim is."

Geffen is one of the most powerful and wealthy men in



Geffen

Hollywood. He made his fortune as a record producer and co-founded DreamWorks Pictures with Steven Spielberg and Jeffrey Katzenberg.

After Kuntz served a fraction of the jail sentence, he was accused of violating a restraining order by going to Geffen's homes in Beverly Hills, California, and Malibu, California, in early November, Wohl said.

Kuntz is due back in court Jan. 23 on a single felony stalking charge and five misdemeanor counts of violating a court order. Wohl expects him to either plead guilty to a lesser charge or have the charges dismissed at that time.

He could face up to four years in state prison if convicted of a felony for stalking.

Wohl described his client as a "good kid" and a "gentle soul" who had no desire to harm Geffen.

'The Interview' expands video-on-demand access

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Sony Pictures Entertainment says it is expanding the digital availability of "The Interview" to top cable, satellite and telecom services, beginning Wednesday and increasing through the weekend.

Starting Thursday, the movie will also be available on PlayStation Network.

In a statement, Sony Pictures chairman and CEO Michael Lynton thanked the new partners and specified that the stu-

dio had always sought the widest possible distribution for the R-rated comedy about an assassination attempt on the leader of North Korea.

The film will also expand to 580 independent theaters

by Jan. 2.

Major theater chains cancelled showings of the movie amid threats against theaters.

New platforms include Time Warner Cable, Comcast and DirecTV.

Guitarist Slash files for divorce after 13 years

NEW YORK (AP)—Guitarist Slash has filed for divorce from his wife of 13 years.

Court documents filed Tuesday in Los Angeles cite irreconcilable differences for Slash and Perla Hudson's split. Slash's real name is Saul Hudson.

The former Guns N' Roses performer and Perla were married in 2001, and he also filed for divorce in 2010, citing irreconcilable differences. The couple have two sons, 10-year-old Cash and 12-year-old London.

Tuesday's documents say the couple separated June 15.

The 49-year-old musician has had success as a solo star and in the bands Velvet Revolver and Guns N' Roses, with whom he was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 2012.



AP
In this March 31, 2012 file photo, musician Slash right, and Perla Hudson arrives at the launch of Marquee, The Star entertainment venue in Sydney, Australia.

Sony: PlayStation back online after 3-day outage

Sony says its PlayStation Network is back online after three days of disruptions that began on Christmas.

But heavy traffic might continue to cause problems for customers seeking to play their favorite games, the company said Sunday.

A group of hackers called Lizard Squad—or someone claiming to speak for it—took credit for the disruptions. In a blog post Saturday night saying service had been restored, Sony vice president Catherine Jensen added that "PlayStation Network and some other gaming services were attacked over the

holidays with artificially high levels of traffic to disrupt connectivity and online gameplay."

Microsoft's Xbox Live service, which also went down Thursday, was back online Friday, although the company reported continuing problems.

So far, there's no evidence to link these episodes with last month's attack on Sony Pictures Entertainment. The FBI has blamed that attack on North Korea, which was furious about Sony's "The Interview," a movie comedy about a plot to assassinate North Korean leader Kim Jong Un.

Chris Brown cancels Philippine concert

MANILA, Philippines (AP) — American recording artist Chris Brown canceled a New Year's Eve concert in the Philippines at the last minute, reportedly because of a lost passport, organizers said Wednesday.

Brown tweeted that "Due to unfortunate circumstances I can't bring in the new year with you..."

The organizers, Maligaya Development Corp., said they were informed by Brown's local representatives Wednesday afternoon that he was still in

Los Angeles.

"According to them, Chris Brown lost his passport the day before the scheduled event," it said in a statement. "Hence despite having entered into a contract with us, Chris Brown would not be able to comply with his obligation to perform."

Brown was set to perform along with other musical acts at the 55,000-seat Philippine Arena in the New Year's Eve concert, which also featured a fireworks show.

APNewsBreak: Elon Musk, actress wife split again

By BRIAN MELLEY
ASSOCIATED PRESS

LOS ANGELES (AP)—When Elon Musk split up with wife, Talulah Riley, for the first time, he told the whole world.

"It was an amazing four years. I will love you forever," the entrepreneur Tweeted to the British actress in January 2012. "You will make someone very happy one day."

Eighteen months later, that happy person apparently was him, as they tied the knot again in July 2013.

The rekindled romance didn't last.

On Wednesday—the day many people make vows for the coming year—the couple officially broke their marital vow. Musk filed for divorce in Los Angeles County Superior Court on New Year's Eve.

The couple said they were splitting amicably and that Musk agreed to give Riley \$16 million in cash and other assets as part of a financial settlement, according to a joint statement. A divorce filing said property would be split based on a prenuptial agreement.

Musk made a fortune co-founding PayPal and has gone on to start

SpaceX and Tesla Motors. Riley appeared in "Pride & Prejudice," "Inception" and "St. Trinians."

The couple first wed in 2010. They didn't have any children, but Musk has five sons from a previous marriage.

Musk and Riley were together for a year after they remarried, but they have lived apart the past five months while Riley wrote and directed her first feature film, "Scottish Mussel," in the United Kingdom.

The two said they remain friends.

Musk did not immediately Tweet news of the divorce Wednesday.



In this March 2, 2014 file photo, Talulah Riley, left, and Elon Musk attend the 2014 Vanity Fair Oscar Party, in West Hollywood, Calif.

AP

Good manners are in short supply when couple eats out

DEAR ABBY: I am recently divorced and now seeing a wonderful woman who is pretty much everything I was looking for except for a couple of issues, which concern going out to eat -- which we do often. Not once has she offered to pay for a meal.

I make good money, but she is not financially strapped by any means. While I can live with her not paying, what annoys me is she rarely says thank you after a dinner date. Once, she ordered a to-go selection to take home to her daughter. I paid for it, but again got no thanks. When we arrived at her house, she gave the food to her daughter without mentioning that I had bought it for her.

Other than her manners, she's a great gal and I'm happy we're together. Am I being petty and overly sensitive? My ex-wife never appreciated me, so I guess it's a sore spot. How should I approach this without jeopardizing everything else?

HESITANT TO SPEAK UP IN THE MIDWEST

DEAR HESITANT: Your great gal has poor manners. Approach it by telling her exactly what you have written to me. Then ask her why she never says thank you and didn't bother to give you credit when you did something nice for her daughter.

Either this woman never learned basic manners, or she takes you for granted. And if this is a pattern with all the women in your life, it's important you understand why and do something about it before you marry again or you will never be happy.

♦ ♦ ♦

DEAR ABBY: I stepped into a public restroom with three regular stalls and a handicap/wheelchair-accessible stall. All the stalls were occupied, so I got in line. By the time it was my turn, the handicapped stall was available. Behind me was a mother with a fussy baby and a toddler, and she needed to use the baby changing station, which happened to be located inside the handicapped stall. I let her go first.

What I didn't realize was a woman in a wheelchair was also in line behind me. She got upset when I let someone else use the stall instead of allowing her. Someone else in line piped up and told her she had to wait in line like everyone else.

When situations like this arise, should disabled people be allowed to skip the line and go straight to the big stall? Even if the mother with the baby and the location of a diaper changing station were not a factor, is the right thing to do to let a wheelchair-bound person use the restroom first, even if he/she is at the end of the line?

TRYING TO BE POLITE

DEAR TRYING: Yes, it is. It's called a "handicapped stall" for a reason. The person with the disability should have been allowed to use it first -- even if he/she was at the end of the line.

♦ ♦ ♦

DEAR ABBY: I have two children from a previous marriage. We have a distant relationship. For valid reasons, they have been

DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.



written out of my will. Should I tell them now, or let them find out after my death?

WONDERING WHAT TO DO

DEAR WONDERING: I see no reason to announce it now, because before you die you might change your mind.

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

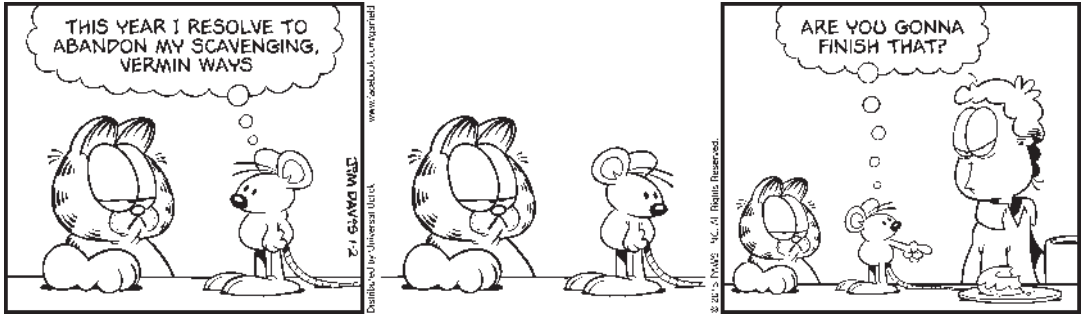
Abby shares more than 100 of her favorite recipes in two booklets: "Abby's Favorite Recipes" and "More Favorite Recipes by Dear Abby." Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$14 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Cookbooklet Set, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

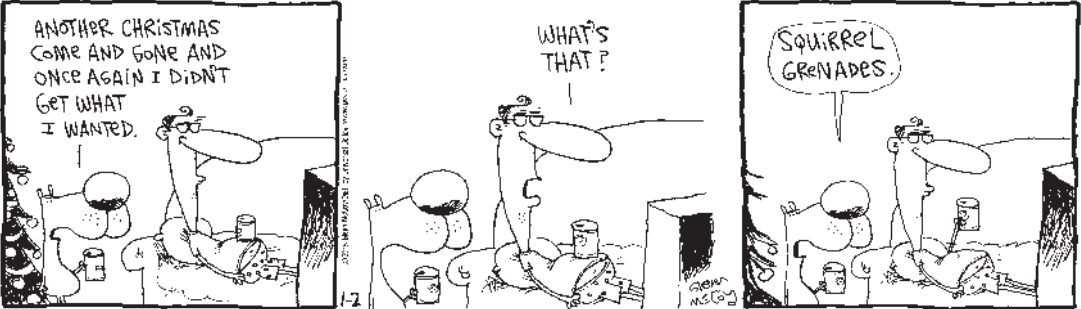
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ACROSS

1 Obese

4 Kitchen VIP

8 Jokes

12 Eggs

13 Atmosphere

14 Urban disturbance

15 Sieve

17 Whirlpool

18 One way to repay

19 Expert

21 Trigger's passenger

22 Roam

26 Cheney successor

29 Toast topping

30 A Gershwin brother

31 GPS suggestion

32 Salary

33 Stumble

34 \$ dispenser

35 Pistol

36 Bed cover

37 Gosling's pop

39 One (Sp.)

40 Parisian pal

41 Tranquil

45 Effervescence

48 Waste

50 Sheltered

51 Ankara denizen

52 Whale group

53 Evicted a pinprick

54 Foolish folks

55 Greek vowel

2 Revlon rival

3 Discussion

4 Howitzer, e.g.

5 Juliet of Fox News

6 Before

7 Somewhere out

8 Inexperienced there

9 Help

10 Pantheon member

11 Pigeon

16 Broadcast

20 "Bones" role

23 Tragic

24 Canal zone?

25 Spell-bound

26 Boast

27 Tittle

28 Rhett's last word

29 "Brady Bunch" sister

32 Slang users' foes?

33 Rose protector

35 Jewel

36 Furtive

38 Stunned

39 Commander

42 Advantage

43 Spruced up

44 Humorist Bombeck

45 Detergent brand

46 Under the weather

47 Last letter

49 Sine — non

Solution time: 25 mins.

Wednesday's answer 1-2

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Kate Bosworth, 32; Dax Shepard, 40; Taye Diggs, 44; Cuba Gooding Jr., 47.

Happy Birthday: Stay on top of the situations you face and be aware of what everyone around you is doing. Limitations and frustration will develop if you are too impulsive when dealing with personal matters. Don't be fooled by what others say. Focus on upholding your status quo, not on trying to outdo those around you. Your numbers are 4, 13, 15, 22, 29, 38, 47.

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Don't be daunted by the changes you see heading your way. Opportunities are more abundant than you think. A new position, contract or change in direction will end up being beneficial. Don't rule out working in an educational setting. ****

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Learn from the best and speak up about your goals. Networking is favored, and planting a seed for future prospects looks good. Expect good things, but be willing to accept a deal that offers more potential than pay. ***

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): You can make a difference if you dedicate time to a cause. Your energy and openness will allow you to step into a position of authority. The influence you have and the contribution you make will bring you satisfaction and recognition. ***

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Take care of personal business that you may have neglected last year. Step up and make the alterations at home or at work that can bring

you good fortune and happiness. Don't announce what you are going to do, just make it happen. ***

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Get serious about the year ahead and make the changes necessary to fulfill your dreams, hopes and wishes for the future. Gathering information, researching your prospects and talking to people who can help you will bring favored results. ****

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Taking care of the needs of children or elders will put you in a good position. Your attention will be appreciated and bring you benefits. Romance is in the stars and will improve your personal life as long as you don't overspend. **

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Avoid anyone trying to goad you into a debate. Travel, shopping or taking part in an event that can help you plan your strategy for the year should be your goal. Reconnect with someone who has helped you in the past. *****

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Try not to make an impulsive decision or move until you have completed your research and are confident that the outcome will unfold favorably. Don't rely on anyone else to take care of your responsibilities or important details. ***

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Someone you thought you could trust will lead you astray. Back up and work privately in order to reach your optimum goal. Positive changes at home will help you work out a difficult situation with a loved one. ***

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Do the work yourself and take credit for what you accomplish. Someone is likely to use unscrupulous tactics to outmaneuver you. Don't reveal your plans and work diligently until you reach your goal. Stand tall and be proud. ***

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Instigate the changes you want to see happen this year. Don't wait for someone else to step in and take over. Someone you thought you could trust will reveal a secret you've been keeping. Express your concerns openly. *****

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Get back to basics and reconnect with people you have worked with in the past. The time is right to readdress an old issue and to redefine what you want to see happen. Change must be built on honesty and integrity. **

Birthday Baby: You are dedicated and respectful. You are challenging and insightful.

Eugenia's website—eugenialast.com, Eugenia's android app @ <http://bit.ly/exhoro> and join Eugenia on twitter/facebook/linkedin.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku By Dave Green

Difficulty Level ★★★★★ 1/02

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WONDERWORD By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD. The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

UNJAMMING THE PHOTOCOPIER Solution: 5 letters

D E N D E A U T O M A T I C P
N U T O I G C Y S I Z E Y D A
I G P A I O D O E L M A A L P
B P O L C T L I P L N A T O E
L C L L I A A R Y L H G F R
A E O A A C L T H T O U E E
C C G L T N A P S S R S W D A
K O M A O E A T E K E A I S M
E L L A L R N T E R R O C T T
T L E U G E T A R D L O U E E
I A M O M E P E C B E P W J L
H T R U S B N M A S N R Y K K
W E C S R O U T A I S I A N O
X O A R T D S S A L G N R I O
D C S T A P L E L L E T T A B

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Last Wednesday's Answer: Pencils

The WONDERWORD MILLENNIUM SERIES #2 is here! Purchase online at www.WonderWordBooks.com or call 1-800-642-6480. (Contains 100 puzzles.)

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Warehouse #2 - Size: 6,000sq/ft
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EXAMINATION ANNOUNCEMENT NO. CCC-14-001
OPENING DATE: 12/24/14
CLOSING DATE: 01/07/15

This examination is for the purpose of developing an Open Competitive and Promotional Eligibility list. It is the policy of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands that the personnel system will be applied and administered according to the principle of equal opportunity for all citizens and nationals as defined by the Northern Marianas Commonwealth Constitution regardless of age, sex, religion, political affiliation or belief, marital status, disability or place of origin.

POSITION AND SALARY: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Salary is commensurate with qualifications and experience.

LOCATION: Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

POSITION SUMMARY
The Executive Director is responsible for the overall administration of the Commonwealth Casino Commission (the "Commission" or "CCC"). The Executive Director ensures that the Commission exercises its authority in compliance with Public Law 18-56 and other Commonwealth laws, Agreements, Rules and Regulations. He/She will be responsible for directing and managing the regulatory activities of the Commission to ensure the gaming industry performs in compliance with the provisions of the Commonwealth Casino Act of 2014 (Public Law 18-56) as well as industry best practices. The Executive Director reports to and is supervised by the Commission.

Note: This job posting is intended to describe the general nature and level of work to be performed by the assigned person. It is not intended to be an exhaustive list of all responsibilities, duties, skills or working conditions.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATION
Pursuant to CNMI Public Law 18-56 § 2315

- A Bachelor's Degree from a United States accredited educational institution or equivalent
- Five (5) years work experience in professional, administrative or management in government or private sectors
- Good ethical and moral character
- Must possess a clean criminal history and must not have been convicted of any crime in any jurisdiction of the United States, or any foreign country carrying a minimum sentence of imprisonment of more than six months, excepting traffic offence
- Must not have any interest, directly or indirectly, in any business under the jurisdiction of the Commission

MINIMUM BACKGROUND REQUIREMENTS
Applicant must submit to and pass background screen, including, but not limited to drug and criminal record investigation. Certain information discovered could result in ineligibility for employment with the Commonwealth Casino Commission. The Commission will require a personal financial disclosure prior to making a final decision.

Applicant must be a US Citizen or US Permanent Resident. CNMI Government Excepted Service benefits will apply.

INTERESTED INDIVIDUALS SHOULD REQUEST A COPY OF THE COMPLETE JOB DESCRIPTION.

CONTACT PERSON:
Ruth Ann P. Sakisat
Commonwealth Casino Commission
C/O The Office of the Governor, 1st Floor
PO Box 500135
Saipan MP 96950
(670) 237-2214

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Doug Marrone steps down as coach of Bills

ORCHARD PARK, N.Y.



(AP)—Turns out the Buffalo Bills aren't "stuck" with coach Doug Marrone, after all.

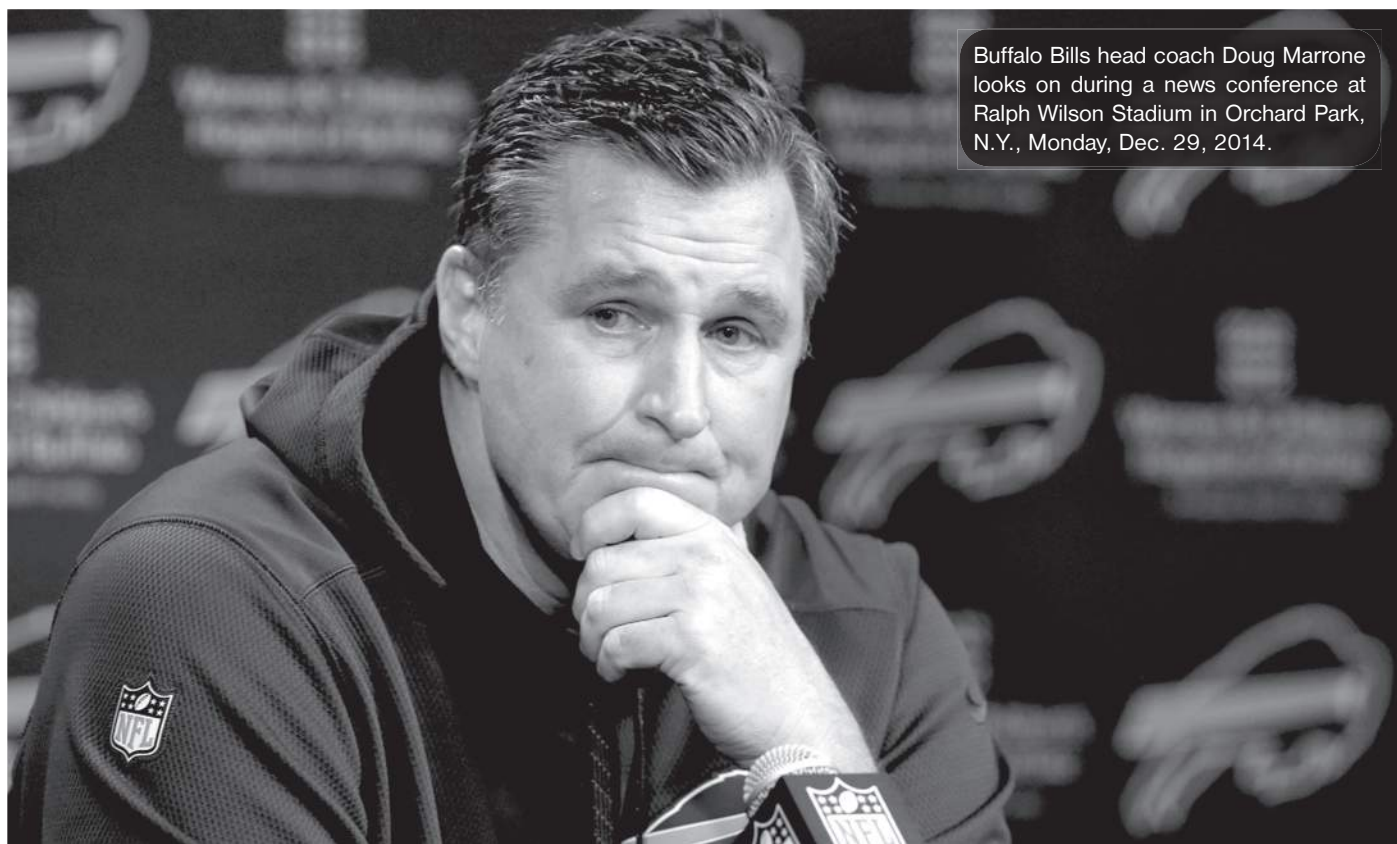
Two weeks after informing reporters "you're stuck with me, fortunately or unfortunately," Marrone made the surprise decision to step down Wednesday after the team's best finish in a decade.

In a statement released by the team, Bills owner Terry Pegula announced the second-year coach exercised the opt-out clause in his contract.

"We are disappointed that Coach Marrone will no longer be an important part of our organization," Pegula said. "We thank him for all of his hard work and leadership during his tenure, and wish him and his family the best with the next chapter in their lives."

Pegula said the team will immediately begin searching for a coach. One candidate might already be on the staff in defensive coordinator Jim Schwartz. He was hired a year ago after previously spending five seasons coaching the Detroit Lions.

The Bills have gone through six head coaches since Wade Phillips was fired following



Buffalo Bills head coach Doug Marrone looks on during a news conference at Ralph Wilson Stadium in Orchard Park, N.Y., Monday, Dec. 29, 2014.

the 2000 season.

Marrone's decision to step down was a stunning one, coming after he led the Bills to a 9-7 finish. It was the Bills' first winning season since a 9-7 finish in 2004. Buffalo, however, missed the playoffs to extend the NFL's longest active postseason drought to 15 seasons.

"Surprised me. Didn't see it coming," center Eric Wood said in a text message to The Associated Press.

Starting safety Aaron Williams blasted Marrone in a tweet. "Lost all respect!!" Williams said.

The opt-out clause in Marrone's contract went into effect after Pegula and wife Kim

bought the team in October. Marrone had until Wednesday to make his decision.

The team was sold after Hall of Fame owner Ralph Wilson died in March.

The timing of Marrone's departure comes as the Pegulas consider hiring a veteran presence to oversee the football operation. Former Bills GM turned broadcaster Bill Polian is considered a candidate to fill what would be a newly created position.

Marrone's status was still considered secure.

On Monday, Marrone sidestepped a question about his future when asked whether he would consider opting out of his contract.

"I do not discuss my contract. That's my rule. I never have and never will," he said.

Marrone is now free to explore other job openings.

Before stepping down, he had the backing of his players. That included veteran defensive tackle Kyle Williams who, on Monday, called it important for the team to maintain continuity after years of shuffling coaches and general managers.

"We've got an opportunity to be a good football team going forward," Williams said. "It would always be kind of a setback or something if you have a massive, massive overhaul."

Marrone went 15-17 in Buffalo. He was hired after four seasons at Syracuse, where Marrone helped revive his alma mater's struggling program.

A former NFL offensive lineman, Marrone was brought in because of his offensive expertise. That, however, never materialized with the Bills who were instead led by a dominating defense over the past two years.

The Bills offense finished

19th in yards gained in 2013, and regressed this year by finishing 26th. And Buffalo's running attack was particularly pedestrian this year in finishing with 1,482 yards rushing, the team's fewest in a 16-game season.

The offensive struggles were in part the result of a continuing revolving door at quarterback.

EJ Manuel, the team's first-round pick in the 2013 draft, proved injury prone in missing six games during his rookie season. This year, Manuel was benched following a 2-2 start.

He was replaced by 10-year journeyman Kyle Orton who finished the season as the starter. Orton, however, surprised the team Monday when he announced his intention to retire rather than return for another season.

Marrone had several eruptions this past season. He blew up at defensive end Jerry Hughes on the final day of training camp in August. Two weeks before the start of the season, Marrone had a heated exchange along the sideline with team president Russ Brandon.

Marrone, at times, was also terse with reporters in providing one-word answers.

He's not the first Bills coach to step down while still under contract.

Mike Mularkey quit the team for undisclosed reasons following the 2005 season after Tom Donahoe was fired as president and general manager.

Marrone was supposed to be part of a new era in Buffalo that began with Russ Brandon being elevated to president and CEO on Jan. 1, 2013.

Brandon hired Marrone. That spring, Doug Whaley was promoted to general manager after Buddy Nix stepped down.

SIDE BAR

Suh won't discuss incident with Rodgers

ALLEN PARK, Mich. (AP)—Ndamukong Suh says he is happy his suspension was lifted for Sunday's playoff game in Dallas.

And that's about all the Detroit defensive tackle was willing to offer about his successful appeal.

Suh spoke Wednesday, one day after a hearing officer overturned a one-game league suspension, saying the Lions' star needed only to pay a \$70,000 fine. Suh was suspended for stepping on Packers quarterback Aaron Rodgers' left leg twice last Sunday in a loss to Green Bay, but now he'll be available for this weekend's playoff game at Dallas.

"I'm just pleased with the decision and glad I have the opportunity - I can go against Dallas and help my teammates win the game," Suh said. "I think that's most important."

Suh made it clear he wasn't going to elaborate about his suspension or the appeal. At first, he tried changing the subject by saying he was focused on Dallas - or some variation of that answer. Later, Suh began repeatedly saying "next question" when pressed about the incident with Rodgers and its aftermath.

When Lions coach Jim Caldwell spoke, he also tried to put a stop to questions about Suh and his appeal, although

he did talk a bit about Suh's attitude in their first year together. Caldwell took over as Detroit's coach after last season.

"I can only tell you that since I've been here with him, he's been the guy that has been solid," Caldwell said. "He's been good. He listens, and he tries to do the right thing."

Suh has a long list of fines and one previous suspension, for two games in 2011 for stepping on the right arm of Packers lineman Evan Dietrich-Smith. Suh has been fined eight times in his career, but this was the first in 2014.

Suh's short-lived suspension came after Detroit center Dominic Raiola served a one-game ban for stepping on a Chicago player. Raiola missed the regular-season finale at Green Bay, and the Packers beat Detroit in a game that decided the NFC North title.

Raiola was wearing a "Bad Boys" shirt Wednesday - a reference to Detroit's championship-winning NBA team of a quarter-century ago - but he said he wasn't trying to send any sort of message with it. He said the offensive linemen have had those shirts for a while and he just happened to be wearing it.

"I know I'm chomping at the bit to get back out there," Raiola said. "I just think this team is hungry. The more shots that

people take at us, the stronger we get, the tougher we get."

Suh stepped on Rodgers once with each foot, which violated unnecessary roughness rules, according to the league. Hearing officer Ted Cottrell heard Suh's expedited appeal Tuesday and ruled that Suh can play at Dallas. Cottrell's decision means the Lions will have one of their key defensive cogs. Suh finished the season with a team-high 8 1/2 sacks and helped Detroit rank second overall defensively and first against the run.

But the disciplinary action against Suh and Raiola raised familiar concerns about the Lions, who went 11-5 to earn a wild card but have had their maturity questioned in the past. Caldwell has received a lot of credit for keeping Detroit focused, but the Lions now have some distractions they need to put behind them before the playoffs.

"Anything that goes on on that field, I'm responsible for," Caldwell said. "Whether it's good or whether it's bad. Every call that's made, every action that's taken out there on the field, that's my responsibility, and if there's something that's negative, it's my job to get it changed. If I don't get it changed, I won't be here very long. I do understand that. I've always understood that."

Phillies trade Byrd to Reds for minor leaguer

CINCINNATI (AP)—The Reds acquired outfielder Marlon Byrd and cash from the Philadelphia Phillies on Wednesday for a minor league pitcher, filling the biggest hole in their lineup.

The Reds tried to get a left fielder through free agency but failed, prompting them to trade for the 37-year-old Byrd. He played center field and right field during his major league career, but came up through the minors as a left fielder.

"Hopefully it's going to be like riding a bike," Byrd said during a conference call. "I'm going to have to put a little extra work on it this offseason."

Byrd is the latest veteran traded for prospects as the Phillies rebuild. They've also sent 2007 National league MVP Jimmy Rollins to the Dodgers and left-handed reliever Antonio Bastardo to the Pirates.

The Phillies have missed the playoffs three straight years after winning five straight NL East titles, two pennants and the 2008 World Series.

Byrd gets \$8 million next season. There's an \$8 million team option for 2016 at \$8 million that becomes guaranteed if Byrd gets 509 at-bats next season. He had 591 at-bats last season with the Phillies and batted .264 with 28 doubles, 25 homers and 85 RBIs. He also fanned a career-high 185 times.

"I know people are going to say he struck out a lot—he struck out last year more than he has," Reds general manager Walt Jocketty said. "He had 28 doubles, 25 homers and 85 RBIs, and that's something we definitely need on our club. Hopefully we can get him to cut down on the strikeouts."

Left field has been a trouble spot for the Reds since Ryan Ludwick suffered a shoulder injury on opening day 2013. He

returned last season and batted only .244 with nine homers and 45 RBIs. The Reds decided to pay a \$4.5 million buyout after the season rather than bring him back on a \$9 million option.

"You know the theme we've been talking about a lot here, that's been having somebody that can really go out there on a daily basis and play the game the right way," manager Bryan Price said.

The Reds were interested in Byrd during the 2013 season. Byrd wound up going from the Mets to the Pirates, who reached the playoffs with his help.

The Phillies got right-hander Ben Lively, who was the Reds' minor league player of the year for 2014. Lively, 22, went a combined 13-7 with a 3.04 ERA in Class A and Double-A last season. The Reds agreed to give up one of their better pitching prospects when the Phillies agreed to include money to cover some of Byrd's salary.

Durants returns, lifts Thunder to OT win



OKLAHOMA CITY (AP)—Russell Westbrook was ejected after a fast start, so Kevin Durant put together a big finish.

Durant had 44 points, 10 rebounds and seven assists in his return from a sprained right ankle, and the Oklahoma City Thunder beat the Phoenix Suns 137-134 in overtime on Wednesday night.

"It felt good. My teammates were running plays for me and getting me open shots," Durant said. "I just tried to finish for them. My shots felt good and that win felt better."

With the game tied midway through the extra period, Durant found Anthony Morrow open in the corner for a 3-point attempt. Morrow hit the shot and drew a foul, completing a four-point play that put the Thunder ahead for good. Prior to that, Morrow had missed all four of his 3-point attempts.

Durant was 13 for 23 from the field and 12 for 12 at the free-throw line. He was 6 for 11 from 3-point range in 40 minutes of action.

"You know, I didn't even realize he had 44 points," Oklahoma City coach Scott Brooks said. "That just tells you what kind of a leader he is. He just kept everybody in the right place mentally and on the court."

Durant's presence became even more important when Westbrook was ejected after scoring 20 points in 17 minutes.

Westbrook picked up two technical fouls late in the first half after a brief skirmish with Suns center Alex Len and then an unspecified infraction near the Phoenix bench. After the game, Westbrook did not want to discuss what led to the second technical. He was more interested in celebrating the Thunder's win and the return of Durant.

"He came out aggressive. He came out like he never lost a step," Westbrook said. "It was a good win for us tonight. We did a good job of sticking together."

Despite Durant's performance, Phoenix still had a chance to win, but Markieff Morris' 3-point attempt hit the front rim with 2.9 seconds left.

"A couple of bad breaks, but even with that we still had Markieff with a good look at it," Suns coach Jeff Hornacek said.

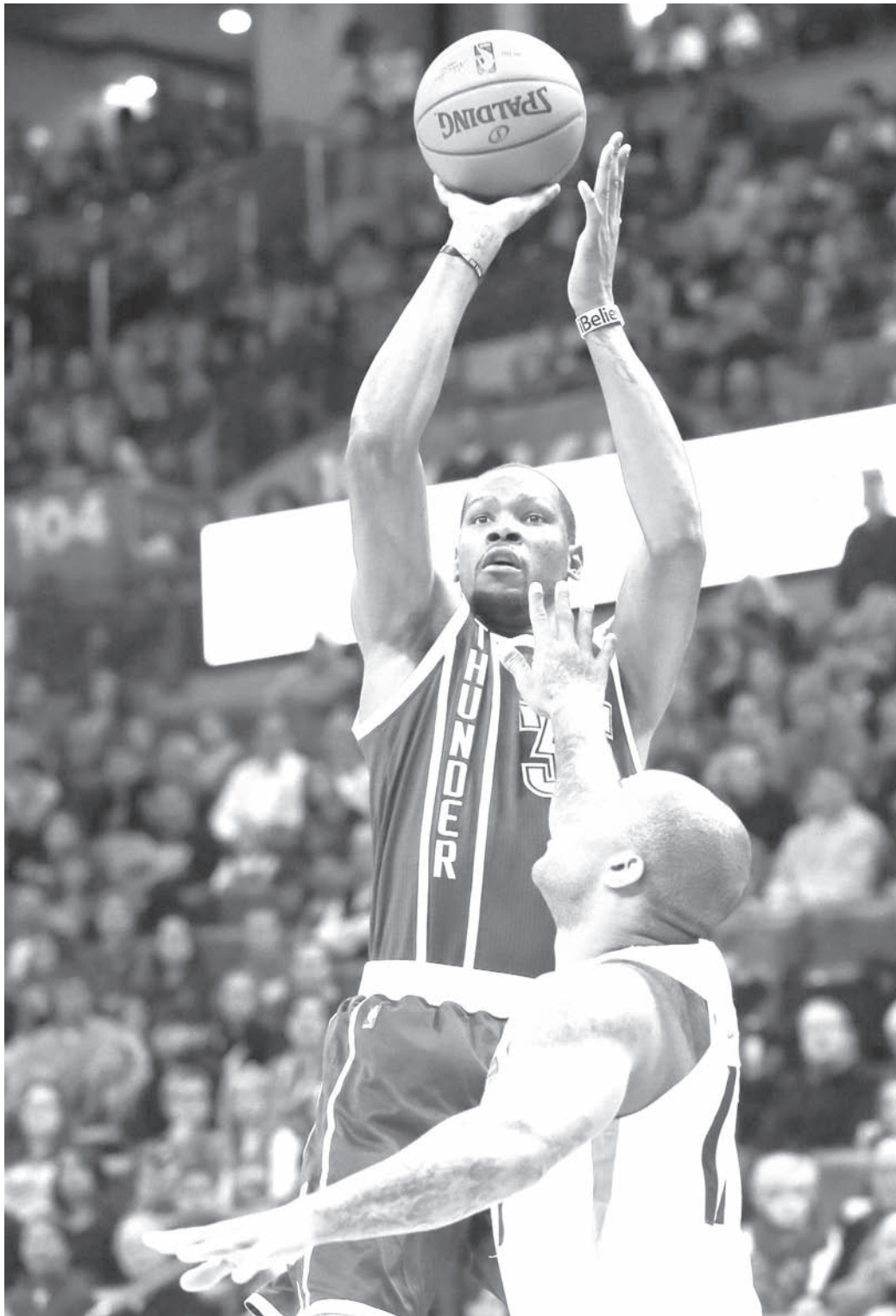
Eric Bledsoe led the Suns with 29 points. Morris had 25 and Goran Dragic finished with 21.

Spurs 95, Pelicans 93

In San Antonio, Manu Ginobili had 26 points, and the Spurs avoided their fourth overtime loss at home in December.

Ginobili had seven points in overtime, helping the Spurs (20-14) overcome an early six-point deficit in the extra period.

San Antonio star Tim Duncan had 16 points and 10 rebounds, tying Hall of Famer Karl Malone for fifth in career



double-doubles with 814.

Anthony Davis had 21 points and 12 rebounds for New Orleans (16-16).

It appeared as if New Orleans was poised for a big road win when Davis followed Tyreke Evans' miss with an emphatic dunk, giving the Pelicans an 84-82 lead with 0.7 seconds left. But Duncan sent the game to overtime, credited with tipping in Boris Diaw's inbound pass at the rim when it looked as if Pelicans center Omer Asik had tapped it in.

Bucks 98, Cavaliers 80

In Cleveland, Brandon Knight scored 26 points and Milwaukee led most of the way in a road win over short-handed Cleveland, which played without LeBron James for the second straight game.

James was sidelined because of a sore left knee, an injury that also forced him to miss Tuesday's game against Atlanta. Kevin Love was out with back spasms, and the Cavaliers went on to their fourth loss in five games.

O.J. Mayo scored 15 points for the Bucks (17-16), and Giannis Antetokounmpo added 14 points, eight rebounds and five assists.

Kyrie Irving scored 25 points for Cleveland, and Tristan Thompson had 10 points and 13 rebounds. The Cavaliers scored seven points in the third quarter, a season low.

Rockets 102, Hornets 83

In Houston, James Harden scored 36 points, and Houston bounced back from consecutive losses.

A big run to start the third quarter put the Rockets well ahead, and Harden put it away when he scored eight straight points to push the advantage to 99-79 with 2 1/2 minutes remaining and send the starters to the bench.

The loss extends Charlotte's skid to four games. The Hornets played without leading scorer Al Jefferson, who is out with a left groin strain.

Michael Kidd-Gilchrist and Gerald Henderson scored 16 points apiece for the Hornets.

It was the NBA-leading 14th 30-point game this season for Harden, who leads the league in scoring. He made eight 3-pointers and also had six assists and seven rebounds.

Pacers 106, Heat 95

In Indianapolis, C.J. Miles

scored 25 points for Indiana, and George Hill added 20.

The Pacers (12-21) have won six straight regular-season home games against the Heat.

Dwyane Wade led Miami (14-19) with 20 points. Chris Bosh had 18 points and eight rebounds, but the Heat lost their third straight since beating LeBron James and the Cavaliers on Christmas.

Miami appeared to be in position to end the skid after scoring the last four points of the second quarter and extending the lead to 56-46 early in the third.

But Miles and C.J. Watson combined for 10 points in a quarter-closing 17-2 run that erased a 68-61 deficit and gave the Pacers a 78-70 lead.

Clippers 99, Knicks 78

In Los Angeles, J.J. Redick scored 20 points, and the Clippers handed the Knicks a year-ending ninth consecutive loss.

DeAndre Jordan added 14 points and 12 rebounds for Los Angeles, and Blake Griffin had 13 points, seven rebounds and tied his career high with 11 assists. Jordan and Griffin scored four points apiece in a 13-0 run at the start of the third period that stretched the Clippers' lead

Oklahoma City Thunder forward Kevin Durant (35) shoots over Phoenix Suns forward P.J. Tucker (17) in the first quarter of an NBA basketball game in Oklahoma City, Wednesday, Dec. 31, 2014.

from 10 points to 23.

Carmelo Anthony was the only Knicks player in double figures with 19 points despite a sore right knee.

Knicks team president Phil Jackson was on hand at Staples Center, where he once guided the Lakers to repeat NBA championships. New York tied a season low for points while dropping to 2-16 on the road.

Celtics 106, Kings 84

In Boston, Jared Sullinger had

20 points and 11 rebounds, and the Celtics snapped a four-game losing streak.

Kelly Olynyk added 15 points for Boston, which never trailed and avoided matching its longest losing streak this season.

Darren Collison and Carl Landry each scored 14 points to lead the Kings, who lost for the ninth time in 11 games.

Sacramento forward DeMarcus Cousins was ejected after collecting his second technical of the game midway into the final quarter. He finished with 11 points and 11 rebounds.

Boston led by 16 after three quarters and pushed it to 92-67 when Olynyk's 3-pointer capped a 9-0 spurt with just over seven minutes to play.

SIDEBAR

Richardson expects to make comeback by end of January

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—Philadelphia 76ers guard Jason Richardson told Yahoo Sports he expects to return to the court in late January after being sidelined for nearly two years.

Richardson last played in game on Jan. 18, 2013, as a member of the Sixers before succumbing to knee and ankle problems. He had knee surgery last February. Richardson said he is two to three weeks from practicing and is currently running on the treadmill and doing light work on the floor, including shooting drills.

"It will mean a lot to come back," Richardson said after the Sixers' practice on Wednesday. "I thought I was done playing. I really did. But seeing my son play AAU over the summertime, seeing his love for the game, it made me get the love back for the game."

"My thing is to always walk away on my own terms. I understand that things happen. Me having this knee injury, fading away like that is not the way I wanted to go out. Retirement is three or four years away from now."

Richardson has averaged 17.5 points, 5.0 rebounds and 2.7 assists over 12 NBA seasons. He is in the last year of his contract making a team-high \$6.6 million for the young Sixers, who own an NBA-worst four wins. Richardson believes he can be a positive influence on his teammates.

"I just want to teach them the little tricks I know," Richardson said. "When I see something wrong, I can be a player-coach to these guys. Sometimes they might get tired of the coach and the assistants coaches. I am one of

their peers, even though I am 10 [to] 12 years older than most of them.

"I am still one of their teammates and still respect the things that they have to say. I will tell them things that I wanted to hear when I was a young guy."

In Phoenix, the Suns recalled rookie guard Tyler Ennis, second-year guard Archie Goodwin and rookie forward T.J. Warren on Wednesday from Bakersfield of the NBA Development League.

The three players each played three games for the Jam. Ennis averaged 15.7 points and 3.3 assists, Goodwin 15.7 points and 3.7 rebounds, and Warren 15.3 points and 7.3 rebounds.

They rejoined the Suns for a game Wednesday night at Oklahoma City. For Phoenix, Warren is averaging 4.2 points in 10 games, Ennis 3.7 in six games, and Goodwin 3.5 in 10 games.

In Salt Lake City, the Utah Jazz have not and will not challenge for a playoff spot this season, but the team has still had a fairly successful campaign so far in new head coach Quin Snyder's first season. With players like Trey Burke, Alec Burks, Gordon Hayward, Derrick Favors, and others, the Jazz boast one of the best collections of young talent in the league. They're not especially good yet, but they're growing together game by game.

It now looks as if one of those players is going to have to progress at a different rate than the rest of his teammates. The team announced Tuesday that shooting guard Burks will miss the rest of the 2014-15 season after undergoing surgery for an injured left shoulder.

Pacquiao gets updates on Mayweather talks



Manny Pacquiao was updated last Wednesday morning on ongoing negotiations for a potential May 2 bout with Floyd Mayweather Jr., according to Pacquiao's adviser Michael Koncz.

"We're still in negotiations with Floyd's group through Top Rank. I spoke to Manny this morning. I gave Manny what is perceived to be a counter offer from the Mayweather people," said Koncz, who then referred to Top Rank CEO Bob Arum.

"We discussed it and now I've given instruction to Bob to counter their counter. We've been going back and forth. Bob has been negotiating with the powers that be on Floyd's side for the past couple of weeks. There's been offers and counter offers, and a couple of days ago Bob called me and gave me allegedly where Floyd's side is, and I discussed that with Manny two hours ago.

"Now I've given Bob our response to that. I'm never overly optimistic until the contract is signed, but the good thing is that we're still going back and forth."

During an interview on Showtime on Dec. 12, Mayweather said that he "would love to fight Manny Pacquiao" on May 2. Click here for Floyd Mayweather Jr.'s full video interview with Steve Farhood

"Mayweather can get the amount he wants," Pacquiao responded on Dec. 16. "Money is not the issue in our fight."

On Wednesday, Pacquiao delivered a final word for 2014 to Mayweather on his Twitter account.

"The ball will drop at mid-

night to usher in 2015," read Pacquiao's message. "@Floyd Mayweather, let's not drop the ball on fighting each other next year! #Lets-MakeFistory."

Mayweather is currently aligned with Showtime, having fought four of six bouts stipulated by a multimillion-dollar agreement he signed with the network and its parent company, CBS Corporation.

Officials from Showtime and HBO, the latter of which has televised most of Pacquiao's fights, have reportedly discussed a joint venture between the networks similar to that which facilitated the fight between Lennox Lewis and Mike Tyson in June 2002.



Division finalists in A, Tuesday B darts league known

By JON PEREZ
jon_perez@saipantribune.com
REPORTER



The finalists in Monday's A and Tuesday B divisions were completed last week as the Saipan Electronic Darts Association season-ending Bud Light league nears its end with games simultaneously being held in various bar on the island.

The Naked Fish Ridin' Darryl and the Smoke Pub Hunters will be contesting the A title, while Sand Juvy 22 Snipers and the Oleai Team Fearless are the finalists in the Tuesday B after dispatching their respective semifinals foes.

Ridin' Darryl completed a 9-4 demolition of the Route33 Mixblood Shooters, while the Hunters scored a masterful 9-1 victory against the Route33 Mafia.

Ridin' Darryl used a 4-game sweep in the singles 501 dou-

ble in/double out event as enough cushion in securing the win and clinching the first finals berth.

In the other semifinals pairing, the Hunters were merciless and quickly disposed of the Mafia.

The Mafia showed little resistance with Erwin Claveillas scoring their team's lone win when he defeated Cris Omne in their match-up in the singles 501 double in/double out event.

In the Tuesday B, the Snipers escaped with an 8-7 win over Marupok, while Team Fearless edged the Smoke Pub High On Darts, 8-5.

The Snipers went toe-to-toe with Marupok as their contest entered Team 1001/1101 open in/double out event tied at 7-7.

Rene Aguayon, Pepe Orola, JR Vito, and Rod Pamintuan sealed the win for the Snipers when they defeated Arvin Orense, Renato Barros, Paul Quizon and Modie Zamora in

the final event.

Team Fearless had an easier time against High On Darts, winning four of the last five events played.

The championship matches were played last Monday and Tuesday and results were unavailable at press time.

Meanwhile, the awarding

of the regular season and Bud Light Cup winners is set on Jan. 25, starting at 10:30am at the Pacific Island Club-Saipan's Charley's Cabaret.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
The Naked Fish Ridin' Darryl players enjoy a light moment after beating the Route33 Mixblood Shooters in their semifinal match-up last week.

TSUNAMI

From Page 32

stroke (49.57 seconds), and 100m freestyle (1:26.16).

In the boys 9 to 10 age group, Tenorio lorded it over against six other swimmers. His 70 points bested the 66 of Tsunami Saipan's Chuckie White. Other participants in the divi-

sion were White's teammates Kiran Toh (50), Entera Louis (7) and Alexander Gayle (5), Andersen Marlins' Riley Solenberg (48), and Tokoha's Shoji Abekawa (11).

Tenorio ruled seven events—50m backstroke (42.08 seconds), 200m individual medley (3:23.17), 100m backstroke (1:34.24), 200m freestyle

(2:55.71), 200m backstroke (3:10.95), and 100m breaststroke (2:00.39)—and had a runner-up finish in the 100m freestyle (1:18.38).

In the boys 11 to 12 division, Batallones rounded out the Top 3 with his 54 points, joining top placer Caleb White (69) and runner-up Ken Hasegawa (66) of Tsu-

nami Saipan. Batallones won the 200m IM (3:15.08) and had the second fastest time in the 100m freestyle (1:15.80), 200m freestyle (2:50.07), and 100m backstroke (1:38.09). He was then ranked third in the 400m freestyle (5:57.99) and 50m butterfly (37.88 seconds) and fourth in the 50m backstroke (41.34 seconds).

In the girls 15 to 16, De Jesus was the second fastest in seven of her eight events to place runner-up to Manukai Athletic Club's Danielle Atoigue. De Jesus collected 54 points against Atoigue's 61. Tsunami Guam's Anabelle Alba also got 54 point to tie De Jesus, while Manho-ben Swim Club's Lorelei Poppe completed the Top 3 after earn-

ing 44 markers.

De Jesus finished second in the 100m freestyle (1:08.43), 50m backstroke (38.57 seconds), 200m IM (2: 56.60), 100m backstroke (1:25.34), 200m freestyle (2:33.05), 400m freestyle (5:30.52), and 50m freestyle (31.10 seconds) and fourth in the 50m butterfly (35.72 seconds).

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straight victory after dropping its opener to Armatech, while IT&E goes for its second consecutive triumph after barging into the win column last Saturday, following a 46-23 rout of Kanoa Resort.

In the boys division, Dream Team and Rollers 2 are tied for the lead with similar 2-0 records.

Dream Team gained its second win in as many games after pulling off a come-from-behind 84-79 victory over Kagman

Risers (0-2) last Monday. The co-leader registered its first win against Rollers 3, 84-50, during the league's opening day last month.

In their second assignment, Dream Team was behind by 10 points at halftime, 28-38, but battled back in the second half with Ignacio Borja, Shane Deleon Guerrero, and Dixon Kwon teaming up in the final 20 minutes of play.

In the other boys division match last Monday, Rollers 2 showed no love lost to sister team Rollers 3, cruising to a 57-45 victory.

Rollers 2 will take a break this weekend and give way to another sister squad, Rollers 1, which will also gun for a 2-0 slate when it meets the 670 Sonics (1-0) in the nightcap at 8pm. In the first boys division tiff, the winless Sun Palace Hotel and Ol'Aces (0-1) will collide at 5:30pm, while in the lone women's division game at 7pm, IT&E faces Sun Palace.

Meanwhile, after this weekend's games, the league will switch to new play dates with the remaining matches scheduled for Tuesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday.

HUSTLERS

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Jerry Soriano and Senen Pangilinan and Simon Kapileo and Robert Sanciangco.

The opposing teams alternated in scoring wins in the singles and second set of matches in partner's 8-ball events with Soriano and Pangilinan's victory over Cepeda and Matsunaga keeping the game close at 5-4.

The Hustlers then won four of the five matches in the second set of singles 8-ball events with Soriano, Pangilinan, San-

ciangco, and Kapileo beating Lee, Matsunaga, Cepeda and John Reyes, respectively, to move one win away from snaring the title.

Thoensaket then prevented the Hustlers from getting the needed win and kept the Titans title bid alive as he bested Sablan in the final singles 8-ball match.

But the Hustlers won't be denied of the win with Soriano and Pangilinan dispatching Cepeda and Matsunaga in their partner's 8-ball match-up to complete their title romp.

The Hustlers earlier downed

Wild Bill's, 9-3, in the semifinals to earn the first finals berth. They also eked out a 9-8 decision against Magic 8 Ball in the Last 8.

The Titans, meanwhile, pulled off a 9-6 triumph over Jonny's Team SCS to arrange a title showdown with the Hustlers. The Poseidon crew nipped National Alamo Car Rental, 9-8, in the quarters.

Meanwhile, the awarding ceremony for the regular season and Budweiser Cup winners is set on Jan. 11, from 10:30am to 5pm at the Pacific Island Club-Saipan's Charley's Cabaret.

33rd Christmas Island Relay

PHOTOS BY JON PEREZ



Saipan Swimming Club Trident members pose with their first place prize in the youth division of the 33rd Christmas Island Relay that took place from the Pacific Islands Club in San Antonio to the Last Command Post in Marpi last Saturday.



Team Usagi's Mamiko Oshima-Berger heads toward the final mile to join her squad before they cross the finish line. Team Usagi topped the adult division.



The SSC Juniors members smile to the camera after coming in third behind Saipan Community School Tsunamis and SSC Trident.



The SCS Tsunamis celebrate after reaching the finish line to place second in the youth division.



Team Hyatt Thrive runners enjoy a light moment.

Participants of the 33rd Christmas Island Relay pose for a group photo at the Last Command Post in Marpi.



The Finishers take a break after crossing the finish line.



Get Fit CNMI's Team Dark Horse and Team Chasing Booty pose for a group photo.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
The US Army Reserve and some members of their family showed their support in the 33rd Christmas Island Relay.

Team Swoldiers, one of four squads supported by the US Army Reserve, is awarded the third place finish in the adult division.





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Durants returns, lifts Thunder to OT win
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SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Tsunami Saipan swimmers triumph

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Five Tsunami Saipan swimmers returned home with high-point awards from the 2014 Guam International Meet.

Kana Suzuki, Isaiah Aleksenko, and Juhn Tenorio took the high-point first place medals, while Angel De Jesus and Nelson Batallones received runner-up and third place awards, respectively, after a successful campaign in the annual competition held over the weekend at the Hagatna Swimming Pool.

Suzuki topped the girls U18 age group after collecting 50 points. She prevailed against Tsunami Guam's Sydney Packbier (46 points) and Joy Blaz (13) and Andersen Marlin's Taylor Frederickson (11).

The Tsunami Saipan bet swam in six events, placing first in four and second in the two other races. Suzuki won the 100m freestyle event (1:38.52),



Tsunami SAIPAN

50m freestyle (46.55 seconds), 200m freestyle (3:35.08), and 50m butterfly (56.56 seconds) and finished runner-up in the 50m backstroke (54.28 seconds) and 50m breaststroke (1:06.84).

Aleksenko made it a Tsunami Saipan sweep in the U8 age group as he bested five other swimmers in his division. He gained 54 points to beat Tsunami Guam's Ty Leon Guerrero (45), Jayen Toh (22) and Luke Leon Guerrero (17), Tokoha Swim School's Kota Shibaguchi (14), and Tsunami Saipan's Andy Cajigan (8).

The 8-year-old Tsunami Saipan member dominated six events—50m freestyle (39.12 seconds), 50m butterfly (47.91 seconds), 200m freestyle (3:12.80), 50m breaststroke (54.52 seconds), 50m back-

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The five Tsunami Saipan swimmers pose with their medals and coach Hiro Kimura after competing in the 2014 Guam International Meet last weekend in Hagatna.

Tan Holdings Basketball Classic resumes

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

The 2014 Tan Holdings Basketball Classic resumes this week-

end after giving way to the holiday break.

Back-to-back triple headers will take place tonight and tomorrow at the Gillette Multipur-



pose Gymnasium as participating teams in the boys U19 and women's open divisions aim to boost their playoff bids. Only the Top 4 finishers in the six-team women's field and eight-squad boys division will make the cut.

In the women's division, the leading Armatech, which won its first three games, hopes to extend its run when it takes on Sun Palace this Saturday at 8pm. Sun Palace, on the other hand, will try to end its three-game slide.

In the two other women's division matches tomorrow, Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan will challenge Kanoa Resort at 5:30pm, while Shirley's Coffee Shop will duel IT&E at 7pm. Fiesta (2-1) attempts to bounce back from a 40-49 loss to Armatech, while Kanoa tries to improve its 1-3 record after dropping back-to-back games before the holiday break. Shirley's Coffee Shop (2-1) will gun for its third

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ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Dream Team's Ignacio Borja, center, is clobbered by Kagman Risers' Jesse Santos, right, and Allan Yu during their game in the boys U19 division of the 2014 Tan Holdings Basketball Classic last Monday night at the Gillette Multipurpose Gymnasium.

Hustlers are Thursday billiards champs

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER



The Route33 Armatech Hustlers ended 2014 with the Budweiser Cup Thursday 8-Ball Billiards League crown in tow, capping their amazing season with a 9-6 win over the Poseidon Ti-

tans in last week's finals held at the latter's home bar in Garapan.

The Hustlers edged Smoke Pub Magic 8 Ball to clinch the top ranking after the elimination round and made it two-in-a-row over their opponents in the regular season finals.

In the Budweiser Cup finals, the Hustlers dropped their first two matches in the partner's

8-ball events and even allowed the Titans to take a slim 5-4 edge in their race-to-9 title showdown.

The pairs of Jun Lee and John Thornsaket and Pat Cepeda and Ray Matsunaga delivered two quick wins for the Poseidon crew after beating the Hustlers' tandems of

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Jerry Soriano, left, joins his teammates for a photo after the Route33 Armatech Hustlers won the 2014 Budweiser Cup Thursday 8-Ball Billiards League last week.